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The Queen's year
See pictures inside

Beginning GIANT — Edna Ferber's sensational new novel

PANTO TIME

* School holidays have brought the glamorous theatrical tradition of pantomimes back on stage, and crowded audiences of children of all ages are following the well-known storybook adventures with laughter, sighs, and tears.

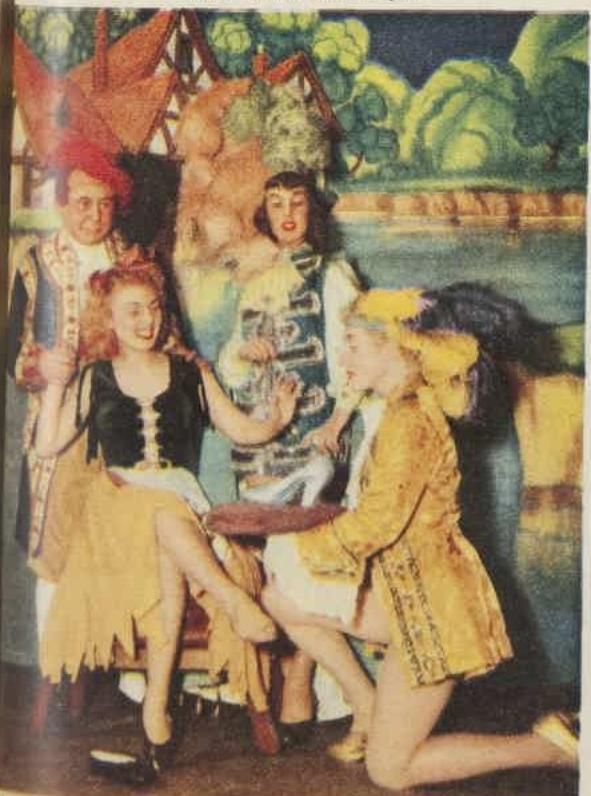
This year Sydney audiences will have a chance to see the first Australian pantomime on ice—"Cinderella."



FLIGHT AT MIDNIGHT down the steps of the ballroom by Peggy Mortimer, who plays the lead in "Cinderella on Ice" at Sydney's Empire Theatre. Her Prince Charming, played by Daphne Lowe, had never skated until she took the part.



MOTHER GOOSE is protected from the Demon King (Neil Easton) by hero Jack (Maggie Fitzgibbon) in the pantomime which has brought Sydney's Capitol Theatre back to its first stage production in 25 years. Mother Goose is played by Eric Valentine and the heroine, Sylvia, by Dawn Lake.



FINALE of "Cinderella on Ice" brings the whole corps de ballet on to the frozen stage in a spectacular modern version of a Viennese waltz. This pantomime has a cast of 100.

LEFT: "Cinderella" at the Tivoli, Melbourne. Dandini kneels to try on Cinderella's slipper while her father and Prince Charming look on. Gloria Daw plays Cinderella.

RIGHT: A scene in "Dick Whittington" at the Princess Theatre, Melbourne, shows a group of well-known pantomime characters, including the cat and the fairy. Nancy Russmann (left) is principal girl.



The many loves of Aly Khan



ALY KHAN and his wife, Rita Hayworth, the second princess in happier days. Parents of a three-year-old daughter, Yasmin, they are now separated, with Rita back at work in Hollywood and Aly wandering hither and thither.



JOAN FONTAINE and Aly were close companions for a while, but she finally scotched marriage rumors with, "Aly asks me to dance and the world wants to marry us off." Joan is now married to Collier Young, ex-husband of Ida Lupino.



YVONNE DE CARLO caught his fleeting interest, but she did not seem to be unduly impressed. Bachelor-girl Yvonne headed back to Hollywood before Aly could discard her among his "has-beens." She found Aly "quite interesting."

• The author of this article, R. E. Porter, despite his prosaic English name, is a Scandinavian writer featured regularly in major European newspapers and magazines. Here he wields a tolerant pen in relating the love-life of Prince Aly Khan, the fabulously wealthy, bored little man whose balding, round-faced appearance contrasts with the reputation as a modern Don Juan which his behaviour has earned for him.

By R. E. PORTER

THE beautiful women in Aly Khan's life come and go, for Aly has a heart that is always ready to love. The big, dark eyes of the 40-year-old, greying Prince, who will one day inherit a fortune too big to assess, are melancholy and bored until they see the face and figure of a glamorous woman.

Then they come alive, and stay that way for a week or a fortnight or—if the woman is very lovely—a trifle longer.

Inevitably, the beautiful creature goes her way—very often with another richly jewelled bracelet or necklace in her jewel box—and Aly's eyes again dim with boredom.

Aly was 25 years old when he married the first time in a tiny chapel just outside Paris. A second ceremony took place in a Parisian mosque on the same day.

That was in 1936. His bride was Mrs. Loel Guinness, divorced wife of a British Parliamentarian, and the former Barbara Yarde-Buller, sister of Lord Churston.

She bore him two children before their marriage ended in 1948, when Aly met Rita Hayworth.

"I have never loved a woman as much as you," Aly told Rita in front of their wedding guests.

But Rita was not happy for long. Aly has had an English upbringing, but his heart is Mohammedan—and the Koran permits several wives.

So Rita left his dazzling palace "L'Horizon," on the road to Cannes. Before she was half-way home to America, her prince was interested in Nancy Maseroni, a beautiful singer from Boston.

Aly, in his usual dark-blue dinner suit, was in the audience when Nancy gave a concert at Cannes. Afterwards, he gave a big party at "L'Horizon," with Nancy as the centre of attraction.

The Koran prohibits alcoholic drink, but Aly likes champagne. He drank Nancy's health six times and danced the samba with her to the rhythm of a bell, which he had bought in Nice.

The reporters licked their pencils and the telephone wires ran hot with the news:

"Prince Aly is dazzled. An American singer is Rita's successor."

Day after day, for two weeks, Aly was at Nancy's side. They drove on the Riviera boulevard in a snow-white car, ate lobsters at Boubou, the world-famous fish-restaurant, danced at the Negresco in Nice, played Chemin-de-fer in a private room at Monte Carlo, and watched Aly's horses run at the big race meetings.

Suddenly, all was quiet. Nancy Maseroni laughed into the Press cameras as she left for Paris by plane, and announced, "There isn't a single word of truth in this marriage rumor. Aly Khan is a good friend, nothing more, and my career goes on further."

On Nancy's right arm was a magnificent gold bracelet with square emeralds. On the fourth finger of Aly's left hand was the wedding ring put there by Rita Hayworth.

"You see, gentlemen, I am married," were Aly's words to reporters while he kissed Nancy's hand.

After this short intermezzo, Aly felt the European earth burning under his feet. He crossed the Mediterranean on his yacht and visited Cairo and Beirut, where he danced and flirted.

In no time the newspapers were again full of marriage rumors.

Her name was Irene Leher. The 19-year-old daughter of a French father and an Arabian mother, she was born in Beirut, brought up in Paris, and was a vivid mixture of East and West.

Nightly, at one of Beirut's best clubs, Irene danced old dances with naked feet, flaming red hair, and big grey eyes full of temperament and life.

Newspaper headlines promptly described her as "the woman who is as beautiful as Rita."

For a week Irene stayed on Aly's yacht as his guest with an elderly woman friend of hers. They danced, swam, and drank champagne together.

Then the week was over. Irene went back to her dancing—without an engagement ring. Aly went further on his way, and in Naples enjoyed himself in a Royal manner among high Italian society.

He sent a telegram to Rita:

"When do you arrive?"

"Never!" came the answer.

Aly left for Paris looking for new adventures.

Joan Fontaine and Aly Khan met in Paris, fell into each other's arms, and said: "Glad to see you."

They had met in Hollywood. Joan was a friend of Rita's, and just divorced from film producer Bill Dozier.

"I'm so tired of people—they make me nervous," cried the blonde, ethereal Joan.

FIRST PRINCESS



FORMER Barbara Yarde-Buller married the Prince in 1936, after brewery-heir Loel Guinness divorced her, naming Aly as co-respondent. She is the mother of Aly's two sons.

"I understand you very well," replied Aly, and from that moment he did not leave Joan's side.

They ate together at Le Boeuf sur le Toit. They drank champagne and danced through the nights at Gina. They talked about Rita, Aly and Rita's daughter, Yasmin, and Joan's daughter, Debby.

The intelligent and gracious Joan was different from Rita. She was as beautiful, and she had an air of melancholy which attracted Aly.

The restless couple went to Deauville in Aly's new Cadillac. Their departure was noted and big headlines asked "Will Joan Fontaine be Princess Aly Khan No. 3?"

Then Joan got an angry letter from ex-husband Bill Dozier.

"I do not want the mother of my daughter featured in newspapers with this woman-hunter," wrote Dozier.

Joan showed the letter to Aly. A few hours later they crept quietly out of their hotel. The reporters got to work on the hotel porter and in no time wheedled their destination from him.

Joan and Aly were discovered in a small mountain village. Bill Dozier acted at this news by taking possession of daughter, Debby. Joan and Aly parted with a smile.

Rita's flirtation

MEANTIME, Rita had started a Hollywood flirtation with blond "man" Kirk Douglas. They danced together cheek-to-cheek in nightclubs and Kirk very publicly kissed Rita on his bare shoulder. Gossip writers wrote about them—and Rita maintained a sphinx-like smile.

Aly was disturbed. He is small and somewhat puny, while Kirk is little built with iron muscles. When the world Press reported that Kirk had broken his engagement to millionaire Irene Wrightsman because he wanted to direct all his energies to the pursuit of Rita Hayworth, the restless Aly flew back to the Riviera.

His nostalgia for Rita did not last long. On the cover of a French magazine he saw a fetching photograph of Lise Bourdin.

Aly was fascinated at once. He read that the 24-year-old model Lise, from Vichy, had been appointed ambassador-at-large of French fashion and would give a huge party in Paris before departing for Rio de Janeiro.

Aly hied himself to Paris. Little Lise Bourdin, who had had no trouble maintaining her slim figure over the year because she could never earn enough money to buy much food, was floating along in the glamour of her sudden elevation in the fashion world.

Her glamor world was complete when an invitation for dinner and dancing arrived from Aly.

The news raced around Paris. The house of Balmain gave her a dress for this dinner made of green Turkish silk, laced with gold. It left the right shoulder bare and was held together on the left with a diamond brooch. With this dress came a pair of gold sandals and a hair-comb of old Spanish gold.

Lise Bourdin's green eyes shot telling lights with her frock and her hair.

WHO will be the next . . . ?



LIANA ZAFFERANI, young Italian clerk, claims Aly proposed to her and she accepted. Aly makes no comment on the reported engagement.



IRENE PAPPAS, beautiful Greek actress, preferred Aly to Orson Welles. She held the fickle Prince's interest for nearly three weeks.



LISE BOURDIN, a Paris model, was too optimistic. She thought Aly would marry her, talked too much, refused a Hollywood film contract.

dawned like gold. Unlike Rita's, the hair was not dyed.

Aly invited a number of friends to the dinner-party—but he danced only with Lise. At the end of the evening he said good-bye with the statement that he had a surprise for her which she would know about in a week.

To her reply that she would be in Rio de Janeiro, he smiled, "That's all right." And it was. When Lise stepped off the plane at Rio, Aly was there to greet her.

To the exuberant Lise this meant only one thing—Aly was in love with her. They went on to New York. Then Lise went to Hollywood, where Rita was in the midst of film-making. Aly went back to France.

In Hollywood the happy Lise Bourdin gave an open-hearted interview. "The moment Prince Aly Khan's divorce is through we will marry," she announced.

"He proposed to me and I said yes. Where did it happen? Sorry, but that's our secret. Somewhere in South America, somewhere where there were no reporters around us. It was very romantic, just as I always imagined it would be."

Lise rejected a film contract with a laugh:

"No, I am going back to France. Aly awaits me there. I have a contract in Paris and will act for a while in the theatre. Then I shall marry Aly."

Then came a typist

WHEN Lise arrived at the Paris airport, Aly Khan was not there to meet her. He was somewhere else altogether—he was in Milan, in love with a 17-year-old typist, Liana Zafferani.

The ball-dress which Liana wore to the Welfare evening in San Remo was made by herself of material given her by her grandmother, who took her to the ball. It could not compare with a gown by Dior or Faeth, but the pretty Liana graced it with her 17 fresh young years.

When a small but obviously sophisticated man arrived at the table to ask if she would dance, her grandmother asked sharply, "Who are you?"

"Aly Khan, Madame."

Liana danced with Aly. Then he sipped champagne and she sipped soda-water. Aly told her she was beautiful, and she wanted to know how many women he had told that to before. Then he asked for her address in Milan.

"You must not ring me at home!" exclaimed Liana. "My father would not like it."

"If you come to Milan sing me at the office. I am a stenographer with an importing and exporting firm and the phone number is 294362. But you won't ring—you will have forgotten me by to-morrow."

"I don't think so," answered her prince.

THIRD PRINCESS?



GENE TIERNEY, long recognized as Hollywood's best-dressed woman, is Aly's current interest. They are haunting Paris nightclubs together.

Liana went back to her typewriter and told her mother about her adventure. She did not tell her father. A big basket of yellow roses was delivered to her home, but there was no note or card with them.

The first letter from Aly fortunately arrived at a time when her father was not at home. It was full of foolish phrases of love, calculated to delight the heart of a 17-year-old. After that he wrote each week.

Liana's replies went off by return mail. For the first time in his life Aly heard about the everyday worries of a working girl—the office, the boss, her colleagues, and so on.

The correspondence continued for several months. Then it stopped suddenly. Liana's dream world collapsed when her mother showed her a news item about the Cannes Film Festival.

The item was headed: "Prince Aly Khan will marry the Greek film star Irene Pappas."

The tall, slender Irene Pappas, from Corrynth, was a sensation at the Cannes Festival. She was at the start of her career, so her acting ability was not the reason. It was her vivid beauty, accentuated by long eye-lashes, which prevented admirers from identifying the exact color of her magnificent dark eyes.

The divorced wife of a handsome Greek actor, she announced that she had left her husband because she "did not want to forget the thought of love."

At the same time she spurned all but two admirers because she "could not think of marrying again."

The two admirers were Orson Welles and Aly Khan—the one a former husband of Rita Hayworth, the

other her present husband.

Irene hovered between the two, and then chose Aly.

The ubiquitous Orson went his way with the phlegmatic comment, "A triumph of the material over the spiritual."

Marriage rumors started. Irene declared energetically that she would not marry Aly. She also declared, "I live with my sister in Athens in a little room which has only one window."

She flirted and danced with Aly. She drove his car and dined with him. She went up to Paris with him, and wore the most glamorous and expensive gown at a big ball. Gossip stated that Aly had bought it, but Irene proved that one of the Parisian salons had lent it to her.

On her left arm was Aly's gift, a platinum and ruby watch. Asked if it were an engagement present, she laughed.

"Ridiculous! We are good friends, but we are not thinking of marriage at present."

While the marriage rumors were at their height, Irene went back to her film work and Aly wandered around until he met Rita in Paris for their highly publicised and short-lived reconciliation.

Reconciliation fails

ALY greeted Rita with enthusiasm and Rita, who had let her grooming go a bit during her last weeks as chatelaine at "L'Horizon" before fleeing to America, responded with a white-toothed smile from glittering Hollywood make-up.

With many a glance at the ever-present reporters and photographers, they swept off to Aly's Paris home in the suburb of Neuilly.

Once established in the home, however, they sent for the photographers and posed Romeo and Juliet fashion on the balcony. Aly smiled pleasantly, but Rita looked icily sultry in a magnificent form-fitting blue dress with a huge white pique collar.

A few days later it was all over.

Sniffing heavily with a cold in the head, Rita moved to a suite at the Ritz Hotel. Then she went off home again to America.

Then, quite suddenly, Liana Zafferani announced that she was engaged to Aly.

According to Liana, he appeared in Milan one day and proposed to her in her mother's presence.

Aly has made no public announcement on the engagement. On Liana's dressing-table stands a big photograph of Aly, which she said he gave to her.

On the piano in the drawing-room at "L'Horizon" is a photograph of Rita Hayworth. Every morning the head gardener at the palace picks 50 fresh red roses for the bowl which stands beside the picture.



LATE NEWS

PARIS.—The newspaper *France Soir* reports that Aly Khan and actress Gene Tierney, who dine and dance nightly at luxurious Carroll's Nightclub, talked "so passionately" together on a recent evening that the club singers stopped singing.

Aly also escorted Gene to an international star-studded Paris ceremony. To this beautifully gowned turn-out, Gene wore a frock which she made for herself from material which cost £2.

Among all the sumptuous gowns, its elegant simplicity landed her on the front page of world fashion magazines. It also landed her in trouble with her former husband, fashion designer Count Oleg Cassini, who burned up the transatlantic phone asking Gene why she had not worn one of his creations.

Listeners to the telephone conversations claim that the Count did not ask about Aly Khan.

HOKEY POKEY HITS THE BEACH



HAIRDRESSER Audrey Cooke, on holiday from her home at Parramatta, N.S.W., watches Hokey Pokey enthusiasts form a big circle on Coolangatta Beach. To Audrey, who likes tennis and reading, it "all looks a bit silly."

The game of Hokey Pokey—not the dance—is popular on Queensland beaches all the year round. These pictures show how two young visitors joined in the fun of the big Hokey Pokey circle at Coolangatta.



LEFT: Bank clerk Brian Howe, from Miles, near Roma, also watches. After four days at his guest house he knows no one and spends his days on the beach. To him the Hokey Pokey looks "bewildering."

ABOVE: Hokey Pokey circle, seldom less than 100, gets set for the game, which is a set sequence of movements done in rhythm to the tune of "Ivory Rag." Beach broadcasting system explains to new arrivals that at Coolangatta "Hokey Pokey" means "Hi, neighbor! Let's get friendly."



COAXED into the circle, Audrey and Brian, strangers to one another, are self-conscious at first but gradually get into the spirit of the game. Friendly atmosphere leads to inter-guest-house barbecues, football matches, and fancy dress balls.



NEWCOMERS Audrey and Brian (left) are chosen from hundreds of competitors by their guest house to compete in the grand finals, held each week. They are also elected leaders of the big daily circle. They practise diligently for the championship.



CLAD in Eastern costume, they are in top form for the finals. Contest narrows down to them and a pair dressed as old-time surfers. The judges cannot decide between two pairs, so Audrey and Brian share Grand Champion skip. Honor lasts for a week.



TRIUMPHANT, Audrey and Brian are carried aloft by "giant Nubian servants." Audrey, who has since become Mrs. F. Ward, and her husband will spend their holidays at Coolangatta in March. They were married last month, and called there while on their honeymoon.



CHRISTMAS PARTY. A pretty frock of lilac organdie was worn by Caroline Crisp, of Caulfield, when she danced with Bill Waite at the party at Sherbrook, Double Bay, given by nine young hosts.



FAREWELL. Begum Haroon (centre) was farewelled by Mrs. Rex Money and Mr. Bill Kendall when she and her husband, who is the retiring High Commissioner for Pakistan, returned to Karachi in the Stratheden. Many passengers sailed to Adelaide for the Davis Cup.



DINNER-DANCE. Hostess Simone Pirenne with Pat (left) and Michael Osborne, of "Carrandooley," Bangendore, and Jennifer Tatchell at her Christmas party at Raneliff, given by her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Louis Pirenne. Simone's frock was of white chiffon.

Social Greetings

CHRISTMAS cards from near and far have been conversation pieces at the hectic party-upon-party round of the past few weeks.

From Bombay, Mrs. Ernest Watt received a card from Neville Wadia, painted with Persian motifs in silvery-greens and blues.

Rear-Admiral and Mrs. J. W. M. Eaton have received a historical card from Admiral Barnard, who is vice-chief of the Naval Staff in England. It is a picture of Queen Elizabeth I in the superb dress she wore to St. Paul's Cathedral to return thanks for the defeat of the Spanish Armada.

Famous singer Gladys Moncrieff has received a lovely picture of the present Queen from fellow-singer Stella Wilson, who is now official hostess at Australia House, London. The Queen is wearing a cream brocade frock and holding a bouquet of gold roses similar to the picture on our April 23 cover this year.

Evie Hayes usually delights her friends with cards containing scenes from "Annie Get Your Gun," but because of her rush trip back to New York last month she and her husband, Will Mahoney, are settling for the traditional red Santa and reindeer.

THE brief break after Christmas will give everyone time to prepare for New Year's Eve, when 1953 will be ushered in with all-night parties at Palm Beach and at Terrigal. In the country, Elinor and Alison Sparke, of "Stradbrooke," Maitland, have invited 80 guests from Sydney, Scone, Muswellbrook, and Dungog to their party at their home. They are daughters of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Sparke. Guests will include Ruth and Bill Graham, from "The Valley," nearby, Lucy Martin, from Taree, and Ruth Wurker, from Merriwa.

MANY Sydney people drove to Penrith for a Christmas party held to announce the engagement of Neville Matthews, of Turramurra, and Judith Barrow, of Penrith. The party was at the home of Judith's parents, Dr. and Mrs. I. M. Barrow. Seventy guests attended. Judith's ring is a sapphire with diamond shoulders.



AT THE TENNIS. Mrs. Sylvia Quist with visiting American tennis star Tony Trabert, after he had played in the inter-zone finals of the Davis Cup at White City courts.



ENGAGED. Helen Price, only daughter of Mr. and Mrs. L. T. R. Price, of Wagga, and Philip Wearne, of "Dungey Park," Moss Vale, celebrated their engagement at Romano's.



IN ADELAIDE. Lieut. John Bennett, R.A.N., son of Colonel and Mrs. Rex Bennett, of Collaroy, and his bride, formerly Nola Malcolm, of Largs Bay, Adelaide, leaving St. Alban's Church, Largs Bay.



ENGAGED. Hon. Henrietta Loder, daughter of the Governor of North Ireland and former Governor of N.S.W., Lord Wakehurst, and Lady Wakehurst, and Mr. J. W. Reader Harris.



ED IN CALIFORNIA. Renzo Bonini, of El Cerrito, California, and his bride, formerly Jeanne Beck, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Beck, of Drummoyle, after their wedding at Berkeley, California.

EX-ASCHAM girl Jacqueline Champneys will marry John Bell of "Pickering," Denman, on January 17 at the Cathedral in Townsville at 7.30 p.m. John's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Bell, will motor up on January 12. John was best man and Jacqueline was bridesmaid at Ray Bowman's wedding to May Bettington last year. Jacqueline is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Champneys, of "Kinrara," Mt. Garnett, North Queensland. Her bridesmaids will be her sisters, Virginia and Susan, her cousin, Yvonne Atkinson, of Mt. Garnett, and Honor Bowman.

A REUNION after five years will take place when Mrs. Noel Charley, of Wahroonga, meets her daughter in England in March. Mrs. Charley will sail in the South Africa Star in January. Her actress daughter's stage name is Helen Lindsay.

WOOLBUYER June McAlister, of Manly, has decided to stay in England until after the Coronation. June went abroad with Diana Loveland, of Coombabahra. She is at present avoiding the English winter in the Channel Isles.

TWO Australian pioneering families were linked in Melbourne when Margaret Boundy, of Sandringham, and David Wallace Smith, elder son of Mr. and Mrs. Alex Wallace Smith, of "Brooklyn," Wagga, were married. Margaret's father, the Rev. F. C. Boundy, officiated at Wesley Church, Melbourne. David's brother Graeme was best man, and Robert Jones and Ian Heard were groomsmen. David's great-grandparents, the Armstrongs, took up Bush Station, where the city of Geelong now stands, in 1832. The present site of Geelong College was the original homestead.

MAKING their home in Scotland are Peter Lawrence Duff and his bride, formerly Val Kendall, of "The Rock," Wagga, who were married in Glasgow recently. Val and Peter are both expert skiers. They met at Zermatt, Switzerland, last year. Val's parents, Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Kendall, and her brother, Phillip, are homeward bound after touring Great Britain and the Continent for six months.

BRIEFLY. Margaret Cohen, daughter of the H. D. Cohens, of Lismore, who is holidaying in England, has a Christmas holiday job in the jewellery department of a big London store.

Tom and Audrey Payne, of "Isla Mede," Gundy, have their second baby, to be called Susan. Bill and Jane Smart are settling into their home at Mt. Irvine after a honeymoon on the South Coast. Jane is the daughter of Col. and Mrs. R. O. Wynne, of Mt. Wilson.

Teenaged Marion Parer has flown to Switzerland to a finishing school, "Villa Beata," near Zurich, for 12 months. She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Leo Parer, of Clifton Gardens.

Anne



PROCLAMATION. Elizabeth was proclaimed Queen on February 8, 1952. The then Lord Mayor of London, Australian-born Sir Leslie Boyce, receives an order in council directing that the proclamation be read (above).



GEORGE VI'S FUNERAL. The first public ceremonial of the Queen's reign was the tragic occasion of her father's funeral. Above: The cortege arrives at St. George's Chapel, Windsor, where the King was buried.



VISIT TO ABERDEEN. The Queen and Princess Margaret smile to the crowd from their carriage at Aberdeen Station. The Lord Provost Graham of Aberdeen is on the left. The Queen visited Scotland in October.



VISIT TO THE THEATRE. The Queen arrives at the Criterion Theatre, London, to see "The Young Elizabeth." This was her first visit to the theatre since she became Queen.



The QUEEN'S YEAR

ELIZABETH'S first year as Queen is nearly ended. Since her accession she has fulfilled all the demands expected of her high destiny.

Since the death of her father on February 6, 1952, when she flew back to England from South Africa, her life has been one of constant duty.

Brought up by a fond mother and father in the company of her younger sister, Margaret, Elizabeth knew that one day she would be faced with the duties of Queen.

However, these duties came at a much earlier age than anyone anticipated when her father, whom she loved dearly, died suddenly in his sleep.

At the time of his death, Elizabeth, with her husband, had begun her tour of Africa, Australia, and New Zealand.

Next year Queen Elizabeth will be faced with the pomp and ceremonial of the Coronation.

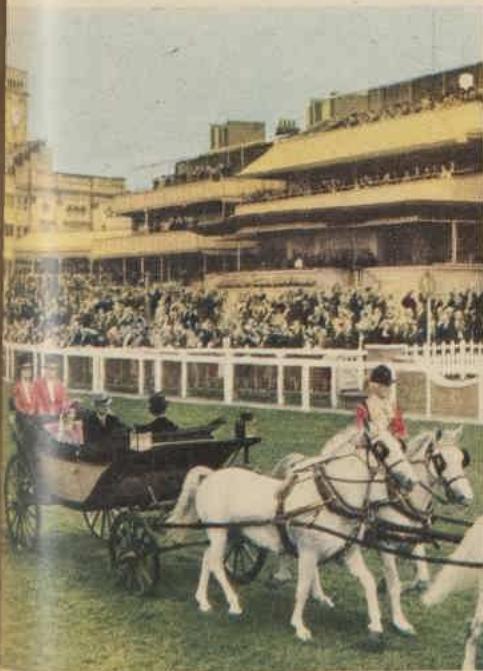
That she will win all hearts is sure. Her gracious and graceful ways have already won her the affection and love of her people.

SAGANA LODGE (left). Elizabeth enters the hunting lodge which was a wedding gift to her from the people of South Africa. It was here that she learned the news of her father's sudden death.

THE AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S WEEKLY — December 31, 1952



TROOPING OF THE COLOR CEREMONY. The Queen takes her birthday salute after the Trooping of the Color in Horse Guards Parade, London, in June. Her mount, Winston, was unruly during the ceremony. The year before she deputised for her father during his illness.



AT ASCOT. The arrival of Her Majesty the Queen and His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh was heralded by an outburst of cheering from the crowd when they attended Royal Ascot in June.



PRIZE FROM A QUEEN. Her Majesty wore a lovely evening gown and diamond tiara when she attended the Royal Windsor Horse Show in July and presented rosettes to women competitors.



ROYAL WINDSOR HORSE SHOW. The Queen talks to children in a hand-made pony cart drawn by their pony Barley Sugar at the Royal Windsor Horse Show in July. The Queen wore a foulard frock, white hat and accessories.



GRACIOUS MONARCH. The Queen is greeted on arriving to lay the foundation stone of Lloyd's new building in Leadenhall Street, London, in November. Accompanied by the Duke of Edinburgh, the Queen wore an ivory lace gown.

Special Holiday Fiction



MY name is May and I've been in show business all my life — never known anything else—and for the past twelve or fifteen years I've been Alice Seale's best friend. Sam's, too, for that matter, although there was a time when he was jealous of me and thought I did a lot of interfering. I never did, really, but that's what Sam thought.

You see, Sam Seale was one of the biggest names in variety some years ago. He used to be even a headliner at the Palace, when they didn't have bigger names. I suppose nobody remembers Sam Seale now—certainly not any of the new generation.

He was special. Variety from top to bottom. He had to have the stage to himself. He just couldn't play a part in a musical or a skit. The act had to be Sam Seale.

He was a wonderfully good-looking fellow in those days . . . dark, sleek hair, blue eyes, high color, and a first-class build.

The women went mad about him.

Perhaps he drank a little too much and he certainly did like the horses, but he enjoyed himself. And everybody liked him.

The funny thing to me has always been how a man could change so much just by marrying a woman he loved and who, heaven knows, loved him.

It happened when Alice and I were chorus girls. She was always more beautiful than I, but we got along well together. She always struck me as just being a chorus girl—nice, but rather dumb and without any ambitions.

You know what chorus girls are like. She had fair hair, a perfect complexion, and a wonderful figure.

There were always plenty of men after her, but they never got anywhere. Sometimes, when I saw what she turned down, I thought she was stupid. I suppose in the end she

Illustrated by
HEDSTROM

Dangerous

by Louis Bromfield

wasn't. Alice wanted Sam and nobody else.

She and Sam got together one night at some party, and from then on the issue was clear. Alice was the woman Sam had always been looking for. As for Alice, this was it.

They got married about a month after they met. Alice left her show, and the honeymoon was in the North, where Sam had billings in all the best places.

After about six months, Sam came back to the Palace for two weeks and Alice wrote to me and said, "Come and see us!" So I went to the opening and was I surprised! There in the act was Alice along with Sam.

I thought, That's the end of it. It's going to spoil Sam's act. I knew plenty of cases like that where a big actor or variety artist fell for a pretty woman and took her into his act; then she ruined it, and pretty soon the public got bored.

You see, Alice never showed any talent for anything except, perhaps, a little joking and fooling around in the dressing-room.

In all her stage career up to then she'd never had a line. She just walked on and off and looked beautiful. So when I found she was in the act, I had misgivings.

But as the act got going, I had a surprise. Sam did all the work. All the lines were his, a kind of patter directed at the audience.

But in the background, Alice kept backing up the patter with a kind of pantomime. It was just making faces, really, but every face meant something—surprise, horror, delight—the whole gamut, as they call it, but all in a comical way.

I said to myself, "But she's got real talent! That isn't any amateur! She's terrific!"

She could get a laugh by raising one eyebrow. She was a master of the dead pan, which every great pantomimist is. And I suppose, too, that audiences found something awfully funny in the fact that a beautiful woman with such a figure was at heart a real clown.

Well, they extended the booking at the Palace for two more weeks. That had never happened to Sam before and he was astonished, but he never had any doubts that all the success was his—or perhaps just a little bit belonged to Alice because the public, and especially the men, always like to see a really good-looking girl like Alice.

The act opened again at the Palace in Octo-



Marriage

*Alice wasn't just a good actress,
she was a very wise wife*



ber, and it had the same success, only something began to happen that upset Sam.

The Press began to write about Sam's partner, and the agent said that they ought to change the billing from "Sam Seale," as it had been, to "Sam and Alice Seale."

Then it was that Alice began to have a baby. Alice, who was rather innocent about such things, thought it was an accident, but I'm pretty sure, knowing Sam, that it wasn't.

He didn't want to tell her openly she was ruining his career. I'll give him credit for loving her. He didn't want the baby because he was fond of children. It was the only way of getting her out of the act.

Well, after six months she did have to get out of the act. That left Sam working alone for about three months before the baby was born and about two months after.

He was trying—or rather the ham in him was trying—to get the act back into control as a single so he could go on alone with it and get all the applause once again.

But by this time Alice had been seen in most of the places where he was booked, and when she didn't appear the audience was disappointed.

Sam's act was just about as good as ever, but for the audiences which had seen Alice in it the act had a lot of stuff which wasn't there when he tried it alone.

After Little Sam was born, when Alice was up and around again, the agent went to see Sam and said, "How about taking Alice back into the act? Everybody wants her: managers, audience, everybody."

But Sam gave him a song and dance about how both members of a family being on the stage wasn't good for married life. Then the agent broke down and told Sam that he was slipping and that he had to take Alice back.

Then Sam played a trick. He tried to put the decision up to Alice and tried every way to make her say that she'd rather stay at home and take care of the baby.

But Alice wasn't anybody's fool. She'd learned a lot of things—most of all that she couldn't leave the money end of things to Sam.

She said she'd love to come back into the act, and Sam was delighted and disappointed at the same time.

That's the trouble in a lot of theatrical marriages. Two artists get married and they're crazy about each other, but if one gets a better contract or a little more applause all hell breaks loose between them.

The thing that helped in this case was that Alice didn't have a ham-bone in her body. She'd have given him all the applause, but she couldn't do anything about it. That was up to the audience and the newspapers, and they liked Alice better than Sam.

It was then I began to notice for the first time signs

On the opening night she had the audience in the aisles and a new star was born.

Continuing . . . Dangerous Marriage

of what these psychologists call an "inner conflict" in Sam. He would get short-tempered at times, especially after a performance or when he read in the papers how good the Alice half of the act was.

It was a difficult situation. He couldn't do without her and he couldn't ask her to tame down her clowning or the bookings went off, but gradually it dawned on him that she was "it" and that Sam Seale had become the stooge in the act and Alice the star.

And then the final crisis happened. One day the agent came in with a couple of the top musical-comedy producers.

The agent told them he had something wonderful.

Alice said afterwards she thought Sam had suspicions from the beginning of what was coming because he was as jumpy as a juggler.

"It's a big contract for a new musical," said the agent. "It's a terrific opportunity."

"So?" Sam asked.

The agent was embarrassed. He hummed and hawed and finally said, "I'll be straight with you, Sam. It's Alice they want. Of course, there'll be a part for you, too, Sam. They promised to write in something for you, but they've got a part for Alice that's terrific. Really terrific and sensational."

Sam just went dumb. Alice said he looked the way he looks when his stomach ulcers come back, only worse. Presently Sam said, "I'll leave it to Alice," and she said, "Give me twenty-four hours to think it over."

I don't know all the details, but I do know that Alice sat down and had it out with Sam.

She told him that she loved him better than her own life, but she said there were other important things, like, for instance, Little Sam and their old age.

Then she made him a proposition. She said, "I'll take this contract and handle the money so we can put some aside. You'll get a salary which you can spend. In that way we'll save up some money to educate Little Sam and perhaps have some for our old age."

And she added, "Look at it this way. You know how I love you, and heaven knows I know that you love me, but all the love in the world won't feed us and keep a roof over our heads when the public is sick of us. We've got a splendid chance now and I'm just going to take it."

Sam didn't really agree, but he didn't object directly. When they went to the trouble of writing in a special part for him, he wouldn't take it. It wasn't big enough for a man with a name and prestige like Sam Seale.

Well, on the opening night Alice had them in the aisles. It was a big show all about Paris and the British over there during the mad 'twenties, and Alice was a beautiful girl who didn't know about the birds, bees, and flowers, but was very shrewd and surprised by nothing at all. That night a new star was born, as they say.

Afterwards Sam and Alice went to a party to celebrate the opening, and everybody waited till the papers came in, and there wasn't any

doubt. The notices Alice got were terrific.

In the excitement somehow Sam got mislaid, and we didn't notice he wasn't there until I tried to find him to show him the notices.

I looked everywhere for him and finally had to ask one of the men to look in the men's cloakroom, and soon he came back and said, "He's there all right, but I can't get him up off the floor. You and Alice go home and I'll get someone to help me. We'll deliver him."

Alice and I went back to their suite, and the two men brought Sam back. We had a lot of trouble getting him undressed and into bed.

As I started to leave, Alice, with tears streaming down her face, said, "I'm going to get out of the show. It'll kill Sam if I don't. I'm going to leave."

At that I read her the riot act, even to insinuating that Sam was no good and there was no use in wrecking both their lives.

She had the success and opportunity most girls in show business would give ten years of their lives to have. Alice just went on crying . . .

Honestly, I don't see why Alice didn't just throw him out. I never saw a more stubborn woman.

We lived in a hotel to begin with, but it didn't work. Sam had too much opportunity to drink and get into bad company. So we took a place out of town where there was a golf club. The house was rather pretty and Sam didn't put up too much of a fight.

It began going well right away because Sam liked golf, and pretty soon he had a lot of friends and was telling his stories, and he had a part in the show the club gave each year.

He was the star and helped put it on, and that kept him busy and his mind off things. He was a big shot in a little puddle, and that's what Sam always ought to have been.

Sam, of course, wanted her to turn it down immediately. He wanted to go off to the Continent or somewhere and just play around until they'd spent all the money she'd saved up and then they'd see what turned up.

Of course she turned him down. Of course she had another hit, but this time she got him a pretty good part in the show.

But he was a headache to her and everybody else. He'd always worked alone and he was always temperamental and making trouble.

If he hadn't been the husband of the big star, they'd have thrown him out twenty times.

Then the worst thing of all happened. A film company offered Alice a big contract . . . to go to work when her show closed.

There was the usual row, but Alice signed up with the stipulation in the contract that Sam was included on a contract arrangement as a stand-by player.

This gave him plenty of pocket money to spend.

It was the kind of money neither of them had dreamed of, and Alice knew all the things she could do with it. I suppose she honestly didn't like the theatre. It was just wished on her.

She had some money put

aside already and by working for such money for a couple or three years more she worked out they could buy a little house in the country and both leave show business and just settle down.

She tried to explain all this to Sam, and he listened but didn't say anything. He couldn't get into his head that variety was dead and that his career was about finished.

At about this time she took me on as a kind of secretary and companion. Nearly every big woman star had something like that.

It's somebody to take care of the dressing-room door and let people in and out and perhaps answer some mail, but mostly it's somebody to talk to and let off steam to.

At first films looked all right. It was new to Sam and amused him, but once Alice got to work on a picture it was the same story all over again . . . sulking, drinking.

He began to talk about how he wasn't good for anything and he might just as well die because he was only in the way.

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And, of course, studio work isn't like the theatre. He wasn't having to match Alice's glory every night when she got applause and had all kinds of celebrities coming to her dressing-room. She was just working all day at the studio, and sometimes she and I stayed in town overnight.

And then when the picture appeared and got trade review notices, it began all over again.

Sam's friends said, "It looks as if your wife is a great success" and "I should think she's set as a big star, all right," and stuff like that, and Sam went back into the old slump, even worse than before.

And about the time Alice began a new picture, the trouble with the widow began. The widow was the sister of a man Sam knew.

She was rather plump and not too good-looking, but she was a good cook, and on the night Alice and I stayed in town he'd go over to her house, and soon he was going to her house on the nights when we came home. But he always made excuses and said he was going down to the club.

Sam had never really gone out before and Alice didn't suspect him, but I did from the beginning. His disposition got better, and he didn't object at all when we stayed overnight in town, and he began giving Alice little presents. I know signs when I see them,

Alice found out after a while about the widow. It was just before her second picture was to come out, and when they'd shot the last scene she came home exhausted at about one o'clock in the morning and found that Sam wasn't home yet.

I knew Sam was jealous, but I never thought Alice could get very jealous until that time. She was sitting up waiting for him when he came home. When he came in she said to me, "May, will you please go into your bedroom? I want to talk to Sam."

I heard part of what she said and what he said. I didn't try to eavesdrop, but I couldn't help it. It went on for an hour or more and then something happened.

I don't know what, but everything got quiet and after a while I got tired waiting to be called back and went into the living-room. It was empty and their bedroom door was closed.

After that everything went pretty well for the next month. Alice's picture had a big opening in London and she and I had to go.

Alice didn't stay for the celebration party afterwards. She wanted to get back to Sam, and when she got back he wasn't home. And then we had the old stuff all over again.

I suppose you might say that the love life of Sam and Alice was just a series of violent quarrels and violent reconciliations, and I mean it about the reconciliations.

But Alice's contract was coming up again, this time for more money than ever, and one afternoon Alice and I went in for a talk about it with her agent.

Before we left, Sam had got himself into a terrible temper. I could see Alice was upset. All the way in to town she wouldn't talk to me and, as we were coming down the Edgware Road, she said, "May, I'm just not going to do it. I'm not going to sign!"

I turned on her then. I said, "Are you mad? Turning down all that money for each picture!"

"It isn't worth it," Alice said, resignation in her voice.

"What's worth more than that?" I said, and for once I couldn't control myself. I said, "You mean Sam is worth more?"

"Yes," said Alice. "It's something you don't know about . . ."

That remark hurt my feelings, so I wouldn't talk after that. But I had a kind of feeling that my knell had struck.

Well, she and the agent went into a huddle that lasted for hours. He didn't want to see his cut going down the drain, and I should think he told her straight, about Sam and everything.

She drove home about seventy miles an hour all the way. It's a wonder we didn't get stopped. And when we got home she just left the car on the drive and ran into the house.

I suppose she wanted to tell Sam right away and make him happy. I followed her in and found her in the living-room. She was reading some kind of letter she had found on the table, and suddenly she screamed, "May! May! He's done it! It's what I was always scared of! He's killed himself!"

The note wasn't long. It just said, "I can't bear it any

Beauty in brief:

PARTY GLAMOR

By CAROLYN EARLE

ON the eve of a party it is a good idea to allow yourself at least one hour for grooming before it is time to dress.

• Begin preparation with a long, warm tub in preference to a shower. Bath salts or a few drops of perfume are always a nice addition to bathing.

• To be sure of perfect grooming, check up on toenails, eyebrows, and smooth foundation as well as the obvious points of hair-do, manicure, and make-up.

• Give yourself 15 minutes' absolute rest behind a closed door in a darkened room before you begin to dress.

• Make-up your face, arms, and shoulders, and arrange your hair before putting on your dress. Tie your curls in a piece of tulle or in a light scarf if you are unable to step into your frock.

• Team comfortable dancing slippers with pale-colored stockings. Dark, reinforced stocking toes peeping out beneath a hem are ugly. Your feet won't show much, but a pained expression caused by tight shoes is there for all to see.

longer. When you read this I'll be dead. I always loved you, Sam."

It was a typical ham note like the kind they used to read in a corny melodrama. That business, "I always loved you." What hamming!

So I said, "Let's find him quickly . . . quickly!"

I opened the bedroom door, but he wasn't there. He wasn't in any of the rooms, and I went back to their bedroom and opened the cupboard door, and there he was, hanging from a hook with the cord of his dressing-gown tied around his neck.

Alice screamed and fell across the bed, and I started cutting Sam down, as they say.

He wasn't actually hanging. His feet were on the floor, and the cord wasn't tight enough to strangle an ant, and he was breathing as if he were asleep.

Sam, the rat, was playing unconscious and sagged as if he was really hanging, and I had a time unloosening the knot, with Alice screaming and crying on the bed all the time until I yelled, "He isn't dead. Come and help me get him off this hook!"

Well, we got him down and had to drag him to the bed, and I got some brandy, knowing that would revive him pretty quickly even if he wasn't shamming.

And, sure enough, soon he came round, and what did he do, with the noose still around his neck, but begin reading that ham dialogue? He opened his eyes and said, "Where am I? What happened to me?"

First Alice burst into tears and then she got angry. I've seen people angry, but nothing was quite like that.

She said, "You dirty rat! How can you do that to me?" And she said to him everything I'd wanted to say to him for years and then soon she became calm and talked sense in a way I'd never heard before.

She reminded him about Little Sam and about how long they'd been together and that she wasn't going to give up now, after all the years of trouble and fighting just when she'd turned down another big contract, and each time she wanted to emphasise a point or he tried to talk she'd tug on the cord of the dressing-gown that was still around his neck.

It was a good way of controlling a man in an argument. And she said one thing I've never forgotten.

"Look," she said, "this thing between us has gone on for so

long it's a monument, especially in show business, where people don't stick together. It's bigger than we are. We've got to stay together. You cheated me and the monument like a skunk!"

Pretty soon Sam, who was sobbing, quietened down and they were in one another's arms and I was de trop. To make a long story short, that was the end of Alice's career as a star . . .

The funny thing is that after that phony suicide act, Sam sort of straightened out. Perhaps it was the riot act that Alice read to him. That stuff about their life being a monument in show business must have impressed him.

He was always talking about it afterwards to anybody who'd listen. "Our happy life together," he would say, "is a monument in show business!" And perhaps the idea that she'd given up thousands of pounds just for him made an impression . . .

Anyway, with the money they had when they bought a country inn, Alice hired a man to run it, and Sam sat around chatting to the customers, and then Alice had another idea.

They opened a kind of bar and night-club—small but intimate—and Sam became master-of-ceremonies.

It was immensely popular and packed every night.

It seemed as if Alice just had the Midas touch, for soon they were making an enormous profit and Alice was investing it. But the chief thing was that Sam was happy. He was "it" again. He had the top billing.

Now Alice stays at home mostly and cooks and sews like she always wanted to do.

Little Sam is getting on fine and shows great promise.

Last year when I went out, Alice came into town and had lunch with me, and I said, "What do you do all day, Alice?" And she said, "I play auction bridge . . . not contract, mind you, but auction . . . and I belong to the Women's Institute, and sometimes, when he can get away, Sam and I go down to the coast."

Well, you wondered what became of Alice Seale. That's it. She seems to like it. I suppose the theatre was just an accident. Anyway, I think she's very happy.

It goes to show something, but I'll be darned if I know what.

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The double bladed lie

A short short story by **MARY JANE WALDO**

In the window of Hardinger's hardware shop the knives were spread in a bristly crescent on green crepe paper.

The early morning sun struck dazzling flashes from the husky hunting knives beside their leather sheaths, and the Boy Scout knives with all the camping hooks and cork-screws.

Timothy looked long and carefully at all these. He was not in the least interested in them. He was merely postponing the inevitable moment when he would enter Hardinger's and claim his own—his double-bladed knife.

When at last he went in he found Mr. Hardinger back by the cash register, sorting screws into a biscuit tin. "Mornin', son," said Mr. Hardinger. "What can I do for you?"

"I came for my knife," said Timothy.

"Well, now," said Mr. Hardinger. He looked at the boy. Timothy Wood was not what is called a pretty little boy. He was eight years old, but you might have thought him five.

At one end of his bony little body there was a pair of tremendous feet in heavy-duty shoes, and at the other end a blond mop of hair. His long, protruding upper lip made him look something like a blond monkey, and he stuck his stomach out habitually in a futile attempt at holding up his jeans.

He hitched his jeans now, while Mr. Hardinger rummaged in a drawer and brought out the knife. He turned it this way and that, squinting at it, while Timothy writhed with eagerness to hold it in his hand.

At last Mr. Hardinger handed the knife to Timothy. "How d'you like that, eh? Pretty fair job?" he asked.

Timothy studied the nameplate, "Timothy Wood," it was inscribed. "That's fine, Mr. Hardinger," he said.

"That'll be ten shillings," said Mr. Hardinger.

Timothy took out the ten-shilling note and laid it on the counter proudly.

"Where'd you come by all that money, son?" asked the storekeeper.

"My Dad sent it to me for my birthday," said Timothy.

This was not strictly true. In fact, it was strictly false according to the letter of the truth, though by the spirit some would have called it true.

Timothy saw two scenes in his mind, and one had happened only last Saturday. "He'll be eight tomorrow," his mother had said, making one of her little faces. "Imagine me having a kid eight years old."

Then one of the uncles—one of the many, uncles who had shown up suddenly as soon as his father was gone—had tossed Timothy the ten-shilling note. "Buy yourself something, kid," he had said. "You're only eight once."

The other scene was long, long ago. Timothy was not sure how old he was then, but his father had been there, so it was before the divorce and before his father's illness.

His father was whittling a boat for Timothy. He looked up from the whittling, and the shadows of the pepper tree in the backyard were on his face. "When you're bigger

I'll teach you how," he said. "On your eighth birthday I'll buy you the finest knife you ever saw. Every boy should have one on his eighth birthday."

Timothy's dad always meant what he said, but perhaps in the sanatorium far away in the mountains they couldn't get knives. You would think, though, that they'd have birthday cards.

Now Timothy charged out of the hardware shop in order to get to school on time. He was scared of the kids at school, but perhaps things would get better now that he had the knife. It was cold and smooth in his hand, splendid in nickel and pearl. It was only from Hardinger's, but it was a fine knife . . .

He kept it in his pocket during school hours, for he did not wish it to be added to the yo-yos and other prizes which filled Miss Orr's desk drawers.

He was the man of the hour at recess; when he headed home at three o'clock he was glorying in his new popularity and he was followed by a little knot of his class-mates.

The older boys had been let out early to-day. But they were hanging around, looking for something to do. One of them—one of the biggest—came up to Timothy and said in a gentle voice, "Can I see your knife?"

Usually Timothy would have been suspicious, but just now he was

Special Holiday Fiction

flattered. "If you like," he said, and handed it over.

The big boy grabbed it. "If you like," he mimicked in a high voice. He looked the knife over, noting the inscription, "Timothy Wood," he said daintily. "Timothy would what?"

His friends thought this very funny and laughed loudly. They tossed Timothy's knife from one to another, pretending to hide it in their pockets.

Timothy waited while they had their fun; he was scared, but he wanted his knife. The other boys had run away; they knew better than to hang around when the big kids were acting tough.

It probably wouldn't have taken long, but from the schoolyard there suddenly came the cry of "Fight! Fight!" and all the bigger boys rushed back to the yard, yelling. Timothy had to go, too; he wanted his knife.

The fight was a free-for-all and pretty rough. Timothy hovered nervously on the edge of the scuffle, wishing he were somewhere else but anxious to get his knife back.

Then he saw something small and bright hurtle through the air; it landed on the ground near the brawlers, and after a minute one of them screamed in pain and surprise. The scream came from a big kid who was clutching at his arm. A small trickle of blood was running down his shirt sleeve.

Boys scattered in all directions. Timothy's legs wanted to run, too, but that was his own knife, on the ground again now. He stopped to pick it up.

The door of the schoolhouse was

flung open and all the teachers came running out; the headmaster, a large man and an angry one, led the attack. There was no one left by this time but Timothy and the boy with the hurt arm.

Together they were led into the school, down the brown-painted corridor and into the headmaster's office.

"Let me see that," the teacher said. Timothy handed him the knife.

"Where did you get this knife?" he demanded.

"My Dad gave it to me for my birthday," said Timothy.

"But I thought—you live with your mother, don't you, Timothy?"

"My dad sent it to me," said Timothy stubbornly.

"Well. Did you cut Harold with the knife?"

"That little kid?" broke in Harold derisively. "No, it wasn't him. It was Bullock. I don't know who threw him the knife."

"Did you give Bullock your knife, Timothy?" asked the headmaster.

"No, sir," said Timothy, hitching up his jeans.

"Who did, then?"

"I don't know. I just saw it fly through the air—" Timothy paused. He knew they didn't believe him.

There was another thing, too. Timothy felt guilty because he had lied, and the guilt was spreading out inside him to encompass all guilt for all sins ever committed. Perhaps he had given Bullock his knife. Perhaps he had even cut Harold.

"We've had too many of these things happening this year, Timothy," said the headmaster. "We can't let it go on. I know how you must value this knife your father sent you, but I'll have to keep it until the end of the year. You may go home now."

Outside, the afternoon sun had vanished in a chill haze. Timothy's legs were trembling as he walked home, and he was sick in his stomach.

His mother was never home from her job when Timothy got home from school. He put his hand into the letter-box to get the key. There was something else in the letter-box.

It was a letter for Timothy from his father.

He tore it open and read it there on the porch; he ate it up. His dad did not send many letters, and in each one the writing was a little bit worse, but you could read it.

"I'm sorry to get this off too late for your birthday, but things are hard to manage in here. I've had my scouts out, though, and they've finally found just the knife I wanted for you. It'll be along in a day or so. Remember long ago, when I told you what every boy should have for his eighth birthday?"

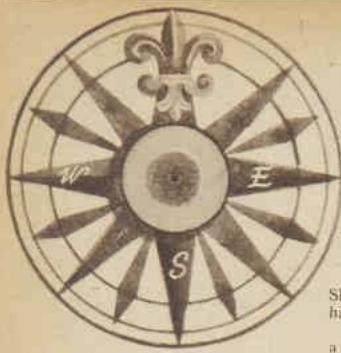
The rest was stuff to make you laugh, about the doctors and nurses, and then the same ending as always: "Take care of your mother." He would try to take care of her. He always tried.

Timothy stood there on the porch. The sun had come back out and the faith which had lately gone out of Timothy came flowing back. He was fiercely glad that he had lost the knife from Hardinger's. It had been nothing but a lie, anyway. A double-bladed lie.

(Copyright)



Timothy looked long and carefully at all the knives laid out in a half circle in the shop window.



Almanac Fair

By DOROTHY STALEY

She had said, "It's silly, isn't it, to have a rooster on a church steeple?"

Peter had hooted. "Rooster! It's a weather-cock, dope." The way he said "dope" made it sound like "darling."

"Well," she had argued, "weather-cock or rooster, it's silly. He doesn't belong on a church in the city. He belongs on a barn in the country."

"Like us. We belong in the country." Peter was always saying things to make a girl's heart skip, but he was never definite, never added that one word, "together."

Remembering, Tacie sniffed vigorously, and Miss Fillmore, who sat opposite her, looked up.

"I hope you aren't getting a cold and spoiling your week-end. I wonder what the weather is going to be." She went to the window and squinted at the cloudy sky. "I hope it's nice, so I can do my laundry."

She sat down at her desk and pulled a pile of policy forms toward her. "Lucky you. While I'm hanging out sheets to-morrow, you will probably be having your breakfast in bed."

Miss Fillmore sighed, but she was not fooling Tacie. Since June, Miss Fillmore had really been Mrs. Theodore Reed—and Mrs. Theodore Reed would rather be laundering sheets and getting breakfast for her Ted than doing anything else in the world. Any girl would.

That was what Tacie had tried to

tell Peter when she had thrown her pride to the wind. But would he listen? Oh, no!

"I," said Peter Cameron, "will not have a wife drudging in an office and slaving in a kitchen to make a lawyer of me."

"But, Peter," she had protested, "nobody slaves in kitchens now, and you have only a year more of college now, and"—she was so certain of her arguments that the words were tumbling over each other—"we both have to pay room rent now and eat out, and if we were married . . ."

"We could, I suppose," interrupted Peter, and he was sarcastic, "live in a caravan."

In spite of the lump in her throat—half tears, half anger—Tacie giggled. "Complete with kitchen stove and laundry tubs?"

The giggle had done it, she supposed. Peter said, "If you want to get married, why don't you marry Canning?"

His tone stopped her like an open hand.

"Why don't I?" she had answered. "I think I will." So now she was sure that she would.

Miss Fillmore leaned across the desk. "The Canning estate is lovely, isn't it, Tacie?"

"Yes," Tacie said patiently. Miss Fillmore knew; she just wanted to talk about the Cannings.

She was getting a vicarious pleasure out of being as near as the next desk to someone who knew the Cannings, one of the oldest families in the city.

And Ernest Canning was nice, his name notwithstanding. He was as good-looking as Peter and much more considerate.

Of course, he was fifteen years older than Pete, which made him twenty years older than Tacie.

When Ernest took her dancing, there were flowers for her hair or wrist and a taxi to the best hotel. But Pete—Pete grabbed a gardenia from a street vendor and rushed her down Chestnut Street to a Chinese restaurant or to some dance-hall.

When Ernest telephoned, he would say, "Hello, Anastasia," as though she were a duchess, but Pete—Pete would say, "Hello, monkey-face," or "Bridget, this is Patrick O'Flaherty," or "Blimey, m'luv, it's a bit of a fog we're avin'."

"There's no sense to Peter," she said firmly to herself. If she had met Ernest first, she would never have looked at Peter. Ernest was dignified and quiet, and a bit formal. His sister Annabel said he had never failed to cross a t or dot an i in his life.

But it had been Peter, not Ernest, she had met when she had come to the city from the little country town whose streets wandered aimlessly over hills following earlier footpaths and whose people spoke to everyone.

The city frightened her with its streets crossing so precisely at right angles and its people who, contrary to their reputation for slowness and brotherly love, scurried along not seeing strangers.

She had not wanted to come to the

city, but Great-aunt Ana and Great-aunt Ri, her father's aunts, for whom she had been named Anastasia Maria and who had raised her, had said that she must.

"It isn't good for you," Aunt Ana said, "to be shut up in a doll house in a little town with two old ladies and see nothing."

"And meet no one," Aunt Ri added.

So she had come to the city, and she had met one Peter Cameron and had thought him a part of the miracle of the city.

She liked the city, she liked her job; she liked the room at Mrs. Muller's, she liked the view of St. John's.

The first thing she had seen when she had walked to the window of her room was St. John's and the rooster on the chapel steeple.

When the employment agency had sent her to Bell, Kimberton, and Bell, she had seen the same rooster from their office window. She had thought it a good omen—and it must have been, for she got the position.

Those first weeks, when she was so terribly homesick, she would hop out of bed in the morning and look at that old rooster up on the steeple and wish he would crow so that just for a moment something would be like home.

But she never told Aunt Ana or Aunt Ri that she was homesick, or that she was lonely, or that she had picked up Pete. Because it was a pickup, and pickups are dangerous. But she had picked up Pete—in front of the monkey cage at the Zoo.



Weather

At last he knew that with
her by his side they could
brave any storm.

She had been very lonely that spring afternoon when she had gone to the Zoo alone. She had stood in front of the monkey cage feeling very alternately for the monkeys and for herself. But, because of that little town where everyone spoke to everyone else, she was neither scolded nor affronted when a nice masculine voice said, "Do you think they are feeling as sorry for us?"

She had turned to see a tall young man almost as blond as herself, and he had been simply lost for words. He had held out his bag of peanuts. She had said, "Thank you," gravely, cracked a nut and eaten it, only to have the young man say ruefully, "They're for the monkeys, you know."

Then they both laughed and agreed that monkeys were the most fun next to people. Before the afternoon was over, Peter was calling her "Monkey-face" and she was telling him about her talisman, the rooster on St. John's.

Peter had said, "Gosh, can you see it, too?" For Peter lived only five streets from her, under the eaves of a five-story house, and across the other roofs he could see the weather vane on St. John's.

"And do you know," he said, "that the darn thing never moves?"

"No?" Tacie exclaimed.

"Not an inch in a year," Pete said. "Fair weather or foul, he stays put—due south-west."

And so, Tacie thought now, pounding the keys of her typewriter, for three years we've watched that damn weather-cock together. She squinted out the window. Due south-west it pointed. If Peter were here he would say, "Fair weather for lovers, darling."

She had learned a lot about Peter Cameron before he'd begun to say that whenever he met her or left her on Mrs. Mosler's steps. She had learned he was at Law School under ex-serviceman benefits, that he laughed at life while taking it too seriously, and that he came from a coal town.

He had taken Tacie there once to meet his aunts and cousins, so she might, he said, be properly introduced to Peter Cameron. It was like Pete to pick her up and then worry about it.

From the cousins she had learned that his father had died when Pete was thirteen and that his mother, who had died shortly before Peter went off to the Army, had impressed on him that he must "make something of himself." So he's making a lawyer of himself, and, with his nice, logical mind, he was going to be a good lawyer.

Tacie banged the typewriter keys. "Nice, logical mind!" she thought. Logical about everything but Tacie Ferguson! One day he would say, "You're wonderful, Tacie. I wouldn't want to live without you." And the next day: "Why shouldn't you go out with Canning? No girl should tie herself down to one man unless he's completely serious."

So, after three years of Peter's backsliding and filling, after three years of his squinting up at the weather-cock and saying, "Fair weather for lovers, darling," when they were not really lovers at all, she had decided to talk seriously to Mr. Peter Cameron.

And what had he said? That was when he had come

"I wouldn't want to live without you," Peter said.

out with: "So why don't you marry Canning?"

"So why don't I?" she had answered. So she was.

Meeting Ernest had been most different from meeting Peter. B. K. & B. had an office broker, a lady who was a charming, impoverished member of society.

Tacie had gone to an art exhibit with this Mrs. Hollis one day, and Mrs. Hollis had looked across a room and said, "Here comes my favorite godchild, Tacie. Be nice to him for me. Between his mother and Annabel, he's had a wretched time."

Tacie saw a tall, lean, dark man with a thin black moustache—a man definitely forty, maybe older.

She was panicked for a moment when Mrs. Hollis, sighting a customer, had said, "Ernest, take care of this child for me, will you? Take her to tea," and had gone off.

Ernest had taken her to tea and apparently liked it, because he had asked her immediately to go to the theatre with him the next week. Ninny that she was, she had consulted Peter, and he had said, "Of course, go. Why shouldn't you?" "You won't mind?" she asked, a bit wistfully.

"Why should I?" Peter answered. Ernest, too, had taken her to meet his family, who apparently considered it a decided avowal of Ernest's intentions. His mother, who was little and fluttery, said, "Oh, my dear, you're quite young for Ernest. He's always been so fru-fru-mature."

Annabel said, "Nobody but Ernest could go to an art exhibit and come away with something as cute as you."

She had vowed that she was not going to see Peter again, or think of him. Since the night he had suggested she marry Canning, she had not spoken to him or seen him. When he telephoned her office she told the switch-girl to say she was taking dictation; when he telephoned the house, or came there, Mrs. Mosler, while she did not approve, told him Tacie was out.

She changed her restaurants, her route to and from the office, and went into Mrs. Mosler's through the back door so that if he were waiting anywhere for her he would not see her.

After all, it had been his idea that she marry Ernest.

Miss Fillmore called across the desk, "I thought you were going to leave at three. It's a quarter past." Tacie said, "My watch must be slow," knowing well that it was not. Hastily she gathered up her things. "Have fun," Miss Fillmore called after her, and Tacie nodded dumbly.

You did not have fun with Ernest. You had fun with Peter. With Ernest things were pleasant and proper; there were good companionship, interesting things to do, and the money and time to do them, but fun.

She felt a little as though she had come to the end of the world, and in a way she had—to the end of the world of Tacie Ferguson. Tomorrow a new world would begin when Ernest asked her to marry him and she said yes.

There would be a short engagement, which was proper, and then she would be Mrs. Ernest Canning, and that would be the end of Tacie Ferguson, who thought it fun to run through the park hand in hand with a blond-haired, laughing boy.

Mrs. Ernest Canning would walk discreetly and decorously for all her lifetime. And a lifetime with Ernest would be long.

Both Aunt Ama and Aunt Ri had

reminded her when she was home for a week-end that marriage is for a lifetime.

"Are you sure?" they said. "Marriage for a lifetime." One had added, "A lifetime can be such a long time." And the other had said, "It takes two to make a marriage, but only one to ruin it."

To two to make a marriage and one to ruin it. Well, she was being honest about it. She did not love Ernest, but she would make him a good wife.

She admired him, respected him, and Ernest loved her and wanted to marry her. Peter did neither. She turned into Locust Street toward Mrs. Mosler's. For three years she had walked through this street with Peter in good weather and bad, in heat and rain.

She had watched him bound up Mrs. Mosler's front steps like an overgrown puppy, glance up at the silly weathercock and say "Fair for lovers, Monkey-face," and they would both laugh, because the weathercock never pointed anywhere but due south-west. Gale or north-easter it pointed south-west, and with rain or sleet pelting them, Pete would still say, "Fair for lovers, darling."

There was a strong wind to-day that whipped a corner of her scarf across her face and tugged at her hair as she went up the steps, but the weathercock, she knew, would point south-west.

With her hand on the doorknob,

When Mrs. Mosler panted up the steps to say Ernest was waiting, she went down and said simply and truthfully, "Ernest, I'm not going with you. I'm sorry."

When he would have protested, she silenced him with a hand on his arm. "I have to be honest with you. Ernest, I know you are going to ask me to marry you, and I would have to say no. I don't want to hurt you, Ernest."

He protested, but in the end he took it like the gentleman he was. When he had gone and she was back in her room, she felt once more as though she had come to the end of the world of Tacie Ferguson. There had been Peter and Ernest, and now there was no one.

A clever girl would have known how to handle Pete; a clever girl would have married Ernest. "Be good, dear child," she mocked, "and let who will be clever." Then she curled up on the bed and cried—for herself, for Peter, and for Ernest—until she fell asleep.

During the night the wind and rain woke her. Rain was slapping at the windows; somewhere a loose bit of tin flapping back and forth sounded like an off-beat cymbal. The storm's fury seemed almost a personal thing, and it frightened her, making her feel more alone.

For once the weathercock had been right; a storm had been coming.

She turned and looked. Then she turned completely around and looked again. Carefully she figured out the points of the compass and checked again.

She turned and faced due east. There was no doubt about it; the weathercock that always said fair for lovers was pointing for storm.

For Peter and her it had always said fair weather; for her and Ernest it was prophesying storm!

She went to her room; her suitcase was standing open on a chair. Her clothes were on the bed ready to be packed. Ernest was picking her up and she had just time to pack and change.

But she went to the window and looked out at the weathercock. She watched a long time, but it did not move. She thought, "It's silly to think it's an omen." Omens were like superstitions; sensible people did not have them. Well, perhaps one or two, but it was ridiculous to think that the weathercock's changing to the east was an ill omen.

Marriage with Ernest would be a good thing. She would make Ernest a good wife for all her lifetime.

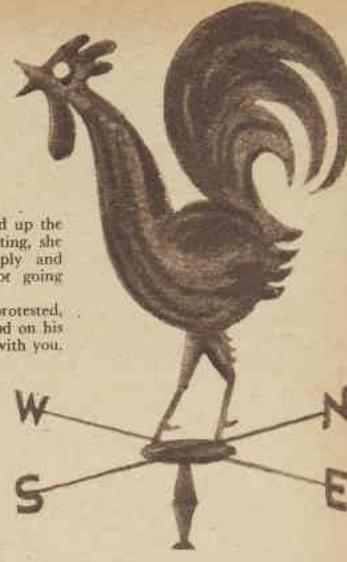
She pressed her face against the windowpane, her eyes still on the weathercock. It would be for all of Ernest's lifetime, too. She had not thought about Ernest's side of it.

It would be long for him, too, married to a woman who did not love him, who appreciated his good qualities, but not a woman who loved him—come fair weather or foul. Ernest deserved better, and more than she had to give.

She walked back to the bed and carefully folded her best nylon slip and put it back in the drawer. She could not do this thing to Ernest. She hung up her dresses, put her new hat in its box.

Then Pete came towards her and took her arm and led her over to the window. "Look, Tacie," he said, "one of the worst storms in its history has hit the city, but the weather vane has not moved at all."

Tacie tore her gaze away from Pete's face long enough to look before saying, "Oh, yes, it has." Then,



having looked, she did not look back at Pete, but stared incredulously from the window. The weathercock pointed due south-west as usual.

"That was the first thing I noticed this morning," Pete said, "and I have been watching it. Everything has been blowing through the streets—tree limbs, roofs, signs. There's a gale blowing from the south-east—I checked with the Weather Bureau—but the old weather vane hasn't even stirred.

"Watching it, I thought to myself: Now that's the way Tacie would be. Staunch through any storm. Never flinching. I've had a cock-eyed idea of how things are and should be. I had seen my mother and father. . . . But poor Mother turned with every breeze. She wasn't strong, wasn't, well, steadfast."

"I thought to myself: Nothing would be too hard for Tacie; nothing would be too hard for me, if we were together. Tacie, the last three weeks have been terrible . . ."

He put his arms around her, kissed her, and neither thought about the weather vane again.

"Let's go," Pete said, so Tacie picked up her coat and wisely added her rain boots, for with Pete there were no taxis; you walked hand in hand through the rain and the wind, and it was fun.

Halfway down the stairs they met Mrs. Mosler, and Tacie said, "Mrs. Mosler, this is the man I'm going to marry." Peter had not mentioned it, but Tacie knew now that there were certain things that did not need to be talked about. They had both grown a little wiser with the storm.

"Glory be," Mrs. Mosler said, "and me telling him all this time you weren't here when you were." As they opened the street door, she added, "Where are you going? You can't go out in this storm."

"What storm?" Peter asked. "It's fair weather for lovers."

And then next morning, when Tacie ran down the outside steps to meet Pete for breakfast, the men were working in St. John's churchyard, gathering up broken slates and uprooted shrubbery, and one was saying to the other, with a jerk of his finger toward the weather vane, "Not even this storm could move that old bird. Twenty years I've been here, and it's never moved."

Tacie started to say, "Oh, yes, it has." But then she stopped. Had it moved yesterday? Had it pointed east? Her steps slowed and she looked at it quizzically.

Then she hurried up the street, for she could see Pete coming toward her. What difference did it make to-day how the weather vane had pointed yesterday—it had been in the right direction.

She raised one hand in greeting to Pete and ran to meet him.

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THE INVINCIBLE Miss Cranston

ILLUSTRATED BY BOOTHROYD

By
JEROME WEIDMAN

Only one brief night of the cruise remained—surely it would bring her the victory she had so long sought and planned.

T was not going to be easy. That much was certain. Nor was it necessarily going to be free from unpleasantness. That was something about which Miss Isabel Cranston was even more certain.

The extent of her knowledge did not cheer her. She was an old campaigner. She understood clearly the advantage that lay in total ignorance of the odds to be faced. Just the same, the knowledge that it was not going to be easy, the certainty that the evening stretching ahead might be strewn with unpleasant moments, her complete awareness of the odds arrayed against her neither deterred nor upset Miss Cranston. Like King Henry at Agincourt, Miss Cranston placed her trust not in numbers but in the stoutness of her heart and the justice of her cause. Being a modest person, she did not herself realise how worthy she was of that trust.

"Beg pardon, ma'am," a voice said. "That was the dinner gong."

Miss Cranston turned in the deck-chair. She might have looked funny to most men. The trained observer, however, the person gifted with an eye for seeing beneath the surface, would have seen at once in Miss Cranston what was there in admirable abundance: the toughness of moral fibre that had cleared a wilderness, the strength of character that had opened a continent.

With exaggerated reluctance she brought her glance from the enormous segment of the Atlantic Ocean on which the sinking sun was spreading a filigree of crimson and green. She looked up. It was one of the three stewards, the nice one with the gold tooth that showed when he smiled. The tooth was in full view now.

"Yes, I know," Miss Cranston said, smiling back at him. "Thank you so much."

She spoke with an airy grace that was a bit startling in a person with her pleasant but round and somewhat plump face. Miss Cranston knew this too, because she knew a good deal more about herself than most people do. She knew something else, however. Miss Cranston knew that there were times when airy grace, even though a trifle unsuited to a person with her reasonably good but undeniably substantial figure, could be a formidable weapon.

She had seen it work for others. Miss Paige, of Baltimore, for example. With only one evening left, one short evening out of sixteen long days, Miss

Cranston could no longer afford to disregard any weapon, however unsuitable. She had tried most of the others.

"I thought maybe you didn't hear it," the steward said again. "I mean, he added with sudden discomfort, as though if he had recognised her before she turned around he would not have bothered to stop. "I was just passing by and everybody else went down to dress right after the first gong, so I sort of thought maybe you missed it, ma'am."

"No, I heard it," Miss Cranston said. "It's so nice and cool, though, and the sunset is so lovely, I just couldn't tear myself away."

"Well, you don't want to be late for the captain's dinner." The gold tooth disappeared as the steward backed away awkwardly.

Miss Cranston, who had only been testing the weapon, wondered if it might not be better to save her experiments with airy grace until the evening was well advanced or at least until after sunset. Another steward had once said to her, "All kinds of things go on, ma'am, you know."

Miss Cranston knew there were few subjects on which she was so well informed as she was about life on a cruise ship. The knowledge had been gained at considerable expense and acquired over a long period of time.

Miss Cranston preferred not to think about time or birthdays. It was the kind of thinking that did you no good. The past, counting the almosts and revising the ifs, never helped. It was the future that mattered.

Miss Cranston, who was beginning to feel a trifle chilled in slacks and a halter, shivered slightly. The future, until her next vacation rolled around a year from now, consisted of approximately seven hours.

She was not very happy about wasting three-quarters of one of those precious hours lying out on deck, becoming cold



Special Holiday Fiction

and pretending to be enraptured by the sunset. There was no alternative, however.

She had decided that to-night it was important not to go down to her cabin to dress for dinner until she was certain her cabin-mate, Miss Marilyn Paige of Baltimore, was dressed and out of it.

Miss Cranston had been on enough cruises to know that the decision was a sensible one. She wanted no witness to her preparations. And she wanted no companion when she walked into the dining saloon.

She had watched Miss Paige dress for dinner often enough to know that, on this night, the girl from Baltimore would not be finished and out of her cabin before quarter to eight.

Her wrist watch now showed half-past seven. She would probably catch her death, but it couldn't be helped. She knew what she was doing.

A heavy and obviously masculine step sounded on the deck behind her. Miss Cranston, like an old fire-horse responding to the bell, turned. Her eager smile, which was actually more attractive than most men thought, faltered.

"Oh," she said. "Hello."

The lack of warmth in her voice troubled her. In Miss Cranston's heart, which was as large and kind as it was stout, there was no room for dislike.

The lack of warmth in her voice did not trouble Mr. Harvey Murdoch, of Pittsburgh. It was quite obvious that the large man in the white dinner coat was well on his way to the state of alcoholic stupefaction which, for sixteen days, he had managed to achieve with monotonous regularity by the time canasta started at nine-thirty.

"For goodness' sake," Mr. Murdoch said with amazement. "What are you doing still out on deck in that get-up? Didn't you hear the gong?"

Miss Cranston hesitated. Not so much because she could not bring herself to employ again the small and purely tactical untruth about the sunset. Miss Cranston hesitated because she was always disturbed when she found herself faced by a member of the opposite sex in whom she could see no possibilities at all.

In Miss Cranston's eyes the opposite sex possessed few such members. It was a commentary on Mr. Murdoch that Miss Cranston, whose standards in these matters had been eroded by the years to a point where they could no longer be called high, had never been able to think of him with hope. One reason for this, of

"Hey, there, wait!" Mr. Murdoch called just as Miss Cranston reached the door leading to the deck.

course, was the disillusionment of experience. Miss Cranston had been on too many cruises. There were always two or three Mr. Murdochs on every passenger list. Miss Cranston knew the type.

In her private lexicon they were known as pack wolves, the philanderers who lacked the nerve to do battle on their own, but travelled in groups, or at least in teams, like Mr. Murdoch and his friend from Albany, Mr. Bacon, protecting each other against their victims, who, silly young creatures that they were, always seemed eager to enter the fray alone.

There was another and more compelling reason, however, for Miss Cranston's inability to think optimistically of Mr. Murdoch. It had nothing to do with her age and experience. And it was too bad because, in all respects save one, Mr. Murdoch of Pittsburgh was the most eligible possibility Miss Cranston had encountered on her last four cruises.

Mr. Murdoch was not young, which automatically eliminated the whole body of tiresome jokes about cradle matching, but he was not old, either: a comfortable fifty. He was a widower. And, to judge by the way he spent money in the bar, he was plentifully supplied with worldly goods.

Unfortunately, in spite of these great advantages, there was that one far greater disadvantage: Mr. Murdoch himself.

In Miss Cranston's eyes, which were infinitely more charitable than most, he was not a nice person.

This unfortunate but insurmountable fact, which meant quite clearly that, in the eyes of the rest of the world or at least the rest of the passengers, Mr. Murdoch was an outright boor, seemed to be known to everybody on board except Mr. Murdoch himself and his cabin mate, Mr. Bacon.

"I'm just enjoying the sunset," Miss Cranston said. She didn't like to be impolite but there was something about Mr. Murdoch's beefy face that troubled her. For a moment Miss Cranston, who feared almost nothing, was afraid of him.

She put as much coldness into her voice as a person with her natural warmth and friendliness could muster. "It's so lovely," she said, "it seemed a shame to rush down and dress just because to-night is the captain's dinner."

"It's not a shame to everybody else on this bucket," Mr. Murdoch said. He seemed to find, in his own boisterous words, some secret touchstone of overwhelming wit.

Mr. Murdoch slapped his thigh with a hamlike hand and roared with laughter. Miss Cranston winced. She liked people to be soft-spoken, to have manners, to act like ladies and gentlemen.

"You want to get going," Mr. Murdoch bellowed hilfully. "This is the last chance you'll get to do any hunting on this cruise."

The fact that the remark was true did not diminish its impact. On the contrary. For a moment Miss Cranston lay helpless in the deck-chair. She could feel her cheeks grow hot and her heart turn leaden as she stared, through a slowly forming film of tears, at her tormentor.

How could one person be

Continuing . . .

The Invincible Miss Cranston

so cruel to another? Had she ever done anything, in sixteen days, to hurt Mr. Murdoch? When other passengers had remarked that in his cups Mr. Murdoch was a revolting spectacle, had she not defended him?

"He probably has troubles, poor man, like everybody else," Miss Cranston had murmured to passengers who had not, of course, bothered to listen. A trace of bitterness, so rare in a person of her sunny disposition that Miss Cranston scarcely recognised the emotion, washed through her mind.

What was the use? You practically starved yourself, hoarding pennies all year. You worked nights and even Sundays to make up for the two extra days you would need away from the office in order to stretch a two-week vacation to the dimensions of a sixteen-day cruise.

You forced yourself to the indignity of borrowing from other and younger girls in the office bits of equipment—a white patent-leather purse, a pair of red suede wedges, a black lace stole — that you could not quite work into your budget.

You came aboard with the paraphernalia and the high hopes that had taken a year to accumulate. You did your best, against formidable odds, for sixteen days. The men, like all men, did not appreciate your best, and the girls, like all girls, showed no mercy.

Nevertheless you neither whimpered nor revealed a trace of disappointment. Undaunted you gathered yourself for one final attempt and what happened?

Somebody you had never injured, somebody whom you had actually tried to help, came along and struck you down, wantonly, cruelly, at a moment when you needed every ounce of your waning confidence.

The word, stabbing its way through Miss Cranston's unusual dejection, brought her up short. It acted on her in much the same way that straight bourbon acted on Mr. Harvey Murdoch. It stopped the downward flow of her bitter, self-pitying thoughts. Confidence was something about which Miss Cranston knew a good deal.

She sat up in the deck-chair.

The movement seemed to release those inner springs of strength that had nourished her through many cruises, many captains' dinners, many encounters with calloused pack wolves like Mr. Murdoch, of Pittsburgh.

Miss Cranston, of Greenwich Village and the book-keeping department of The Knickerbocker Box and Lumber Co., Inc., rose to her full five feet two inches. With all the dignity of a seasoned soldier who has remembered, in a moment of shattering crisis,

his strength and his duty, she stared at her tormentor.

"At least," Miss Cranston said, and the calm serenity of her manner gave to her face a touch of something that nature, more heartless than Miss Cranston, had denied her: a touch of beauty. "At least," she said with quiet scorn, "I do my hunting by myself!"

Miss Cranston turned and strode from the deck. Inside, on the companionway, she stopped and glanced at her watch. Seven-thirty-five. She was ten minutes earlier than she intended to be.

Nevertheless, still buoyed by the wave of confidence that had enabled her to vanquish Mr. Murdoch, she was certain that it was safe for her to return to her room.

It was a mess, of course, as it always was after Miss Paige finished getting dressed, but it was empty. Miss Cranston, closing the door behind her, smiled happily. The chill she had suffered by lying out on the deck, even the distasteful encounter with Mr. Murdoch, had been well worth it.

The first step in her last campaign on board this ship had gone according to schedule. It was a good omen. Perhaps, after all these years, this was going to be her night at last.

Unaware that she was humming the refrain of a song that had been popular when most of the other girls on board were still wrangling with their mothers about using lipstick, Miss Cranston slipped out of her slacks and began to dress.

SHE moved quickly and without hesitation. She knew exactly what she was going to wear because she had worked it all out in advance long before the ship sailed from New York. What was a trifle amazing, in the shambles Miss Paige had left behind her, was the fact that Miss Cranston knew exactly where each item of apparel was located.

It is possible, as some cynics maintain, that the years do not bring wisdom, but Miss Cranston was walking proof of the fact that they did bring an understanding of the value of neatness. The less time you had, the more important it became to waste less of it in hunting for nylons and bobby pins.

When she was all dressed, except for the stole, Miss Cranston paused to look at her watch. It was five minutes to eight. Miss Cranston permitted herself a small smile of anticipatory triumph.

She would be entering the dining-room at eight o'clock, a half-hour after the chronic laggards, a full ten minutes after the most intrepid of those who would delay deliberately to make an impressive entrance.

Still smiling and holding the stole in her hands, Miss

Cranston stared into the mirror over the washstand, turning this way and that, examining, from as many angles as she could, what the crowded dining saloon would see when, far too late to be overlooked, she would make her entrance.

What she saw would not have attracted a second glance from those sombre, dark-faced, sullen little men who sit down in front at theatrical opening nights on the pretext, perhaps even in the hope, of discovering some bit of new talent for the insatiable appetite of Hollywood. Miss Cranston's standards were less demanding. She gave herself several glances. And she approved of what she saw.

The long dress, which she had kept hidden all during the trip, was well worth the three weeks' salary she had spent on it. The snug waist enhanced that quite good feature of her figure, and the flaring skirt concealed the features that were, at best, merely adequate. The neckline was cut low enough to attract attention but not so low that it might elicit comment.

The color, a pale and slightly off-shade blue, brought out so perfectly all the gleaming intensity of her really remarkable blue eyes that it gave the observer at least a fighting chance to overlook the unfortunate fact that the jaw beneath the surprising loveliness would have been more appropriate on an up-and-coming welterweight.

Miss Cranston, arranging the lace stole carefully around her shoulders, gave her reflection a final nod of satisfaction. It would do. It might not work, but it would do.

If there were any men on board who, after sixteen days, had not yet made any sort of commitment or were unhappy about the commitments they had made, this carefully delayed entrance in this carefully chosen outfit would give them their chance. And hers.

As chances went, it was a long one, because Miss Cranston had a fairly accurate idea about the commitments of every passenger on board, but she was not afraid of long chances. In fact, she had learned that at her age long chances were her best bets.

Suddenly she faltered. Quickly, her heart leaping with sudden fear for plans endangered, she turned to face the scratching sounds at the door. Before she could move, Miss Marilyn Paige, of Baltimore, resplendent in black tulle and gleaming silver, stood in the doorway.

"Oh," Miss Paige said in surprise. "I didn't know you were here. I thought you —"

Her voice petered out. The door slammed shut behind her. She was a pretty girl and a friendly one, with a pleasant voice and an attractive manner, and Miss Cranston wished her well. But Miss Marilyn Paige was the last person in

the world Miss Cranston wanted to see at this moment.

In fact Miss Marilyn Paige, of Baltimore, was the last person in the world Miss Cranston would have chosen as a cabin mate. The choice had not been hers to make, however. Those things were in the lap of the gods.

More accurately they were in the control of purrs, a breed of men who did not seem to realise how unfair it was to place a girl like Miss Cranston in the same cabin with a girl like Miss Paige.

It was not that Miss Cranston disliked Miss Paige or was jealous of her. Dislike and jealousy were emotions for which Miss Cranston had no time. It was merely that the years had washed away any possible areas of communication between herself and a girl like Miss Paige.

It was like sharing a cabin with a yardstick that showed to the world at a glance your own shortcomings. The contrast was too great and too obvious. Miss Marilyn Paige did not need black tulle and gleaming silver. She could have done without her pleasant voice and her attractive manner.

Miss Marilyn Paige did not even need her generous endowment of beauty. She had something far better. The dew was still on her. She was young.

"I thought," she said with the thoughtlessness of youth, "I thought you were already in the dining-room."

"I fell asleep on deck," Miss Cranston said cautiously. "I didn't hear the dressing gown."

She turned back to the mirror. Working more slowly, trying to stretch the task as long as possible, she pretended a complete absorption in the arrangement of the stole. Out of the corner of her eye, however, she watched Miss Paige hurry across the cabin and begin to hunt furiously through the tangled contents of one of her several suitcases.

In spite of her preoccupation with this new and urgent problem of delaying her preparations until Miss Paige left the cabin, Miss Cranston's experience of many cruises suggested that Miss Paige had probably had a spat with that nice young Mr. Cartwell, the medical student from Chicago with whom Miss Paige had spent practically every moment of her time since they had met during the first evening of the cruise.

This was a pity, because Miss Cranston thought they made a very handsome couple and, even though she and Miss Paige had moved in separate orbits all during the cruise and the younger girl had not confided in her, Miss Cranston wished her well. But Miss Marilyn Paige was the last person in

Slide-fastener doors

A SYDNEY inventor has fitted his kitchen with doors that work like slide fasteners. He is Richard Goldner, 43, one of Australia's most prolific inventors. He calls his new door the "zipador."

The idea for the zipador, like most of his other inventions, came to Goldner in a dream.

When he awoke, Goldner worked out the details and another invention was born.

He hopes to market the zipador soon.

This dream-inventor's remarkable story is presented in the January issue of *A.M.*, now on sale.

Even as she felt her sympathies going out to the younger girl, Miss Cranston felt the stirrings of irritation. This was no time for her to be worrying about Miss Paige. She had her own problems. Resolutely she stared into the mirror and worked on the stole.

"Thank goodness," Miss Paige said. "I was afraid for a minute that I'd lost it." She turned and extended her hand, holding out the object she had found in her suitcase.

"My fountain pen," she said. "I forgot to take it down to dinner with me. They've got the menu pasted in a special little souvenir book, with a ribbon top, and the passenger list printed in it, and a few pages in the book for autographs. Everybody is signing everybody else's book and I wanted my pen."

"I know," Miss Cranston said. "They always do that at the captain's dinner."

Miss Paige, moving towards the door, stopped and turned back. She stared at Miss Cranston for a long moment, as though she were seeing her for the first time.

Miss Paige, chewing her lower lip, seemed to be trying to make up her mind about something. When she spoke, there was no doubt about the awkwardness of the decision she had reached.

"Coming down?" she said.

"Why?" Miss Cranston said, feeling trapped. "Why," she said again, trying to control her voice, "I'm not quite finished." If she were a person given to quick anger she would have been in a rage at the moment. She felt she would have had a right to be.

It was infuriating that the regal entrance on which she had been staking everything for this last night should be endangered because Miss Paige, after a silly spat with Mr. Cartwell, had run out of the dining-room and now wanted somebody to accompany her on the way back. "You run along," Miss Cranston said firmly. "I'll be some time."

Miss Paige hesitated again. Apparently she was reconsidering the decision she had reached a moment before.

In a flash of comprehension that left her almost stunned with shock, it occurred to Miss Cranston that perhaps Miss Paige was hesitating now, not because she had quarrelled with her Mr. Cartwell and

Wuff, Snuff & Tuff.

FOR THE CHILDREN

by TIM



Continuing . . .

The Invincible Miss Cranston

she wanted company, but because she was feeling sorry for Miss Cranston.

If there was anything Miss Cranston detested more than pick wolves like Mr. Murdoch, it was sympathy.

The notion that another girl, especially a younger girl like Miss Paige, was feeling sorry for her left Miss Cranston weak with terror. She didn't want sympathy. All she wanted was a fighting chance.

"That's all right," Miss Paige said, "I don't mind waiting." Before Miss Cranston could reply, the younger girl had come back across the cabin. "Here," Miss Paige said, "let me fix the stole."

With a deft movement she arranged the lace so that it fell softly and gracefully.

"Come on." She seized Miss Cranston's hand and smiled. "You look wonderful," she said. "Let's get down before all the fun is over."

Feeling so miserable that she could not summon up the words of a reply, Miss Cranston caught up her small rhinestone bag and her flowing silk handkerchief as the younger girl pulled her to the door. They hurried along the corridor, down the companionway, and paused finally on the threshold of the dining saloon.

The ordinarily colorless room was, in the phrase Miss Cranston would have employed if she had been capable of speech at the moment, a riot.

Colored streamers and Japanese lanterns had been strung across the ceiling. Toy horns and whistles were being tooted furiously by the enthusiastic diners. Each of the thirty large round tables had its quota of flowers, gay flags, and noisemakers.

Every passenger wore a comic crepe paper hat. Balloons were being inflated and tossed around. At the captain's table the master of the vessel, looking ruddy and fit in his white uniform and gold braid, was puncturing them industriously with a lighted cigarette as they floated by. The sound of popping balloons rose above the steady roar of laughter and the hum of voices.

"Isn't it fun?" Miss Paige said with delight. "Come on."

Before Miss Cranston could protest or protect herself, the younger girl reached down, recaptured her hand, and drew her into the room. The indignity of being led forward like that, as though she were a timid child, was almost too much for Miss Cranston. She flushed scarlet and stumbled on. Several boisterous young men looked up and waved their hands and yelled, "Hi, Baltimore!" Miss Paige raised her free hand and called back, "Hi, Kansas!" or "Hi, Memphis!"

Nobody shouted, "Hi, Greenwich Village!" Miss Cranston didn't expect it. Her entrance was ruined.

In the centre of the crowded, noisy room she stopped and freed her hand with a sharp tug. This was the last time, she told herself, that she would allow her carefully laid plans to be upset by a momentary kindness.

Miss Paige's quarrel with her Mr. Cartwell was her own affair. She had no right to use her cabin mate, to whom she had scarcely spoken a dozen words during the entire cruise, to cover her ignominious return to the dining saloon.

Miss Paige would have to learn, as Miss Cranston had herself learned, that it was not fair to count on others to pull you out of difficulties in which you had become enmeshed by your own foolishness.

"Well," Miss Paige said through her very young smile, "have fun at your table."

"Thanks," Miss Cranston said coldly. "You, too."

She crossed the room and paused behind the vacant chair at her table. The waiter pulled out the chair. Mr. Lindley, the lawyer from Washington, turned to her.

"Oh, hello," he said. "Sort of late, eh?"

"A little," Miss Cranston said with a smile. "I'm afraid I dozed off in my deck-chair and didn't hear the gong when—"

But Mr. Lindley was not listening. He had turned back to Miss Norbert, the blonde who said she was a legal stenographer from Boston.

A balloon exploded in Miss Cranston's car. She jumped slightly. Mr. Cunliffe, the insurance broker from London, smiled apologetically as he brushed a piece of balloon from her arm.

"Sorry," he said. "Good fun, what?"

"Yes," Miss Cranston said. "It's—"

But she was talking to Mr. Cunliffe's right shoulder. Mr. Cunliffe was talking to Miss Durant, the red-head from Pelham Manor who had started eating kippers for breakfast as soon as she discovered that Mr. Cunliffe's accent was genuine.

Miss Cranston turned her smiling glance down on her souvenir menu. Several moments went by before enough of the film of tears had cleared from her eyes so that she could read the choice of entrees.

By nine o'clock, when the captain signalled the end of this phase of the evening's festivities by rising from his table, Miss Cranston had recovered sufficiently to face the next problem. It was not a large one.

In fact, since she knew the status of every one of these people with whom she had shared three meals a day for sixteen days, Miss Cranston knew it was not a particularly important problem, either. She knew that her own table was barren ground. Still, she was a fighter.

Even barren ground could serve to cover an orderly retreat. If she could manage to leave the dining saloon with an escort just once, particularly to-night, she would consider as cancelled the large debt the table owed her.

As the chairs started to scrape, Miss Cranston cast her quick, experienced glance to right and left. Both Mr. Lindley and Mr. Cunliffe, busily stubbing out their cigarettes, were momentarily defenceless.

Their partners, Miss Norbert and Miss Durant, had scurried across to get the captain's autograph before he escaped from the room.

All Miss Cranston had to do was loop her arm through that of Mr. Lindley or Mr. Cunliffe, and before her victim could recover from the surprise, start leading him towards the door. Once they were out on deck, she would be just as pleased as he would be to allow him to escape.

Miss Cranston tried hastily to decide between the two. She had just about made up her mind that she would

mind that she would choose Mr. Lindley, not because she found him more attractive than Mr. Cunliffe, but because Mr. Lindley's Miss Norbert had been ruder to her than Mr. Cunliffe's Miss Durant, when a hand fell heavily on her shoulder. Miss Cranston leaped nervously and turned.

"May I have the honor?" Mr. Harvey Murdoch, of Pittsburgh, said with a leer, "of escorting you to the canasta game?"

It was obvious that he considered the request a tremendous joke. It was even more obvious, from the grins on the surrounding faces, that others shared his opinion. For a moment, as she stared up into the heavy face, the temptation was almost too much for Miss Cranston. But only for a moment. Her sense of dignity came forward to save her.

The distinction between defeat and disgrace may not be apparent to some people. It was crystal-clear to Miss Cranston. She had suffered many defeats. She would never submit to disgrace. With some

that usually provided very poor hunting. On the other hand, since it was the solids who quarrelled most unexpectedly, it was also the sort of setting in which a man, blinded for sixteen days by a relationship that had just exploded, might very well begin to see the charms he had hitherto missed in another girl.

A girl like Miss Cranston, for example. She had known it to happen. Not to herself, of course, but to other girls, on other cruises.

"Hello, there."

Turning quickly in the shadow of the lifeboat, she found herself facing Mr. Cartwell, of Chicago.

"Why, hello," she said, somewhat embarrassed. Miss Cranston didn't know Mr. Cartwell. The gap in their ages had kept them apart during the heavy face, the temptation was almost too much for Miss Cranston. But only for a moment. Her sense of dignity came forward to save her.

The distinction between defeat and disgrace may not be apparent to some people. It was crystal-clear to Miss Cranston. She had suffered many defeats. She would never submit to disgrace. With some



regret, it is true, but without any hesitation, she rose from her chair and stared coldly into the grinning countenance of Mr. Harvey Murdoch, of Pittsburgh.

"I'm terribly sorry," Miss Cranston said. She picked up her purse, her handkerchief, and her souvenir menu and swept past him. "I have another engagement."

Her purposeful gait did not falter until she reached the sheltering shadow of a lifeboat on the starboard deck. Here she paused to allow her quivering nerves to calm down and to consider her next move. Two choices were open to her.

There would be dancing in the saloon and in fifteen minutes canasta would start in the smoking lounge. Quickly Miss Cranston weighed the relative merits and demerits.

There was no denying the fact that canasta was the sort of game where she would find unattached males.

The dancing in the saloon presented a different problem. The only couples who would be dancing so soon after dinner would be the ones who were known in Miss Cranston's cruise dictionary as "solids": Mr. Cunliffe and his Miss Durant, Mr. Lindley and his Miss Norbert, Mr. Cartwell and his Miss Paige.

It was the sort of setting

she had been a dozen years younger, or even six or seven—Miss Cranston shook her head, as though to fling away the foolish thought.

Nine-thirty on the last night of a sixteen-day cruise was no time for daydreaming. There was work to be done. Miss Cranston said, kindly enough, but not so kindly that the shy youngster could possibly mistake her meaning, "What are you doing out here alone at this time of night?"

Even in the shadow of the lifeboat she could see his handsome face flush darker.

"Why," Mr. Cartwell said, "I was looking for you."

"For me?"

"I wanted to ask you something," Mr. Cartwell said unconfidently. "You haven't seen Marilyn, have you? Miss Cranston, I mean?"

Miss Cranston felt a wave of relief. She had been right. It had been a lovers' quarrel, not sympathy for her cabin mate, that had prompted Miss Paige to accompany her into the dining-room.

Her spirits soared at once, as though a vague doubt about her own ability, which had been shackling her capacities to think and act, had been removed. Also, the last vestiges of her resentment against Miss Paige, for having ruined her carefully planned entrance, evaporated.

"I haven't seen her since eight o'clock," Miss Cranston said. "We came in to dinner together." She hesitated and then very quietly she said, "What's the matter? Have a fight?"

Mr. Cartwell's face grew a shade darker.

"Sort of," he said awkwardly. "It was my fault. I'm trying to find her to tell her I didn't mean—" He turned and looked down the deck as though trying, with the intensity of his remorse and the strength of his desire, to pierce the darkness and the bulkheads and find where, on the large and crowded vessel, Miss Paige was hiding from him.

"I guess I'll run into her in a little while," he said as though he were talking to himself and then he seemed to become newly aware of Miss Cranston's presence. "It sort of leaves me at a loose end for a while." Mr. Cartwell smiled shyly. "I feel sort of silly, standing out here. Would you like to go in and dance?"

Miss Cranston smiled back at him. It was always pleasant to know that you had been right about someone. There was no doubt about it. And Miss Paige was a nice girl even though—and Miss Cranston felt a small pang in her heart for the foolishness of the very young—it was obvious that neither one of them was being very bright.

"Let me give you a piece of advice," Miss Cranston said, and she had to pause for a moment because there was a small lump in her throat. "The quickest way to find her is not to go around asking other girls to dance."

She touched his sleeve lightly. "Thanks for the invitation, but I'm afraid I have an engagement to play canasta in the smoking lounge."

The large room was crowded. Miss Cranston stood in the doorway and surveyed the scene. Each table had five chairs. The tables that were not completely filled held two couples. The odds were heavy that most of those couples had sat down together.

There was always the small chance, however, that in at least one or two instances the arrangement was accidental. By plumping herself into one of the vacant chairs, Miss Cranston would make the line-up at that table three girls to two men and she didn't see how anybody could expect better odds than that. Certainly she didn't.

The trouble was that she might choose a table at which both couples were solids, in which case she would be out of the running for the duration of the game. You couldn't change seats in the middle of the game.

Miss Cranston had just about decided to make her choice on the basis of color, to select the table at which no other girl was wearing blue, when her roving eye stopped on a table to the right of the door. She could scarcely believe her eyes or, as her heart leaped with hope, her luck.

The table had two vacant chairs. Two men and a girl, their backs to the door, occupied the other three chairs. The girl was talking animatedly to one of the men. The second man, if the back of his head could be taken for a reliable guide, was either thoroughly bored by, or uninterested in, the conversation of his neighbors.

Miss Cranston did not waste

many seconds in thought or hesitation. She swept across the room, hauled out one of the two empty chairs, and sat down.

"May I?" she said brightly. "I was just—"

Her words stopped but her mouth remained open with astonishment. Not because she felt she should have recognised Miss Paige, even from the back, by the black tulle and gleaming silver. Miss Cranston's astonishment was caused by the fact that the recipient of Miss Paige's animated confidences was Mr. Bacon, of Albany.

It was true that Mr. Bacon was not nearly so irritating a person as his cabin mate, Mr. Murdoch, of Pittsburgh. Mr. Bacon was a good deal younger, for one thing; and if you wanted to be fair about it, something Miss Cranston found it impossible not to be, Mr. Bacon had a certain amount of rudimentary charm.

Nevertheless, after sixteen days it should have been plain, even to a guileless youngster like Miss Paige, that Mr. Bacon was a member of that most loathsome of cruise-ship species, the pack wolves.

"Why, hello," Miss Paige said with genuine delight. "What a nice surprise."

"It got too hot to dance in the saloon any more," Miss Cranston said. "I thought I'd come in here to play a game and cool off."

"So did we," Mr. Bacon said maliciously. "I didn't see you in the saloon."

"Maybe you were too busy to look," Miss Cranston said in her iciest tone. She may have been afraid of a lumbering drunk like Mr. Murdoch, of Pittsburgh, but she knew how to handle the junior member of any team of pack wolves.

Miss Cranston stared through Mr. Bacon and smiled at Miss Paige. "I just ran into somebody out on deck who is looking for you," she said. "I think he has something interesting to tell you."

Miss Paige's pretty face colored quickly.

"If it's all that interesting," she said with a toss of her lovely but, in Miss Cranston's opinion, brainless young head, "I imagine he can write me a letter about it."

"That's what I always say," Mr. Bacon said heartily and he clapped Miss Paige on the back in a manner that Miss Cranston found distinctly offensive. "Always make them put it in writing," Mr. Bacon boomed.

Miss Paige laughed a trifle nervously and Miss Cranston, with a mental shrug, turned away. She wasn't here to chaperon young fools of twenty. The evening was getting on and she had work to do. Miss Cranston turned on the other man at the table the full strength of her smile.

"I hope you weren't saving this chair for somebody," she said, opening her rhinestone bag and fishing for her cigarettes.

"No, no, not at all," the man said and Miss Cranston, wondering why he had not noticed him during the preceding sixteen days, wondered also why he had that faraway look in his eyes.

"That chair isn't—" The faraway look disappeared. A happy smile took its place. "Serena" the man said, jumping

Continuing . . .

The Invincible Miss Cranston

ing up. "I thought you got lost."

He helped Serena into the vacant chair on his left.

"After I got my fountain pen," Serena explained breathlessly. "I found it was dry, so I had to go down to the purser's office to get some ink, and he had a lot of people with him and all insisted on signing my menu. I thought I'd never get away, but gosh . . ."

"She paused in a sort of ecstasy of remembered pleasure. "It's been such a wonderful trip, I don't want to miss anybody."

Miss Cranston's shoulders sagged just the faintest bit. As the eager Serena started passing her souvenir menu and fountain pen around the table, Miss Cranston saw, out of the corner of her eye, that Mr. Bacon's attention was not completely absorbed by the lovely Miss Paige.

The junior member of Mr. Murdoch's team of pack wolves was watching Miss Cranston, too, with a malicious smile. She could tell by Mr. Bacon knew, as Miss Cranston herself knew, that for her the canasta was another defeat.

She wondered dully if it had been such a wise move, after all, to turn down young Mr. Cartwell's invitation to dance. At least in the saloon she would not be immobilised, as she was here, for perhaps more than an hour.

Miss Cranston's heart was not in the game. For that matter, neither was her mind. Miss Cranston's mind was on the three phases of the evening that still lay ahead of her: the amateur entertainment, the midnight costume contest, and the one o'clock dance.

She wondered, with a certain amount of surprise, why the prospect did not excite her. It always had. There was no reason why it shouldn't this time.

Miss Cranston roused herself, almost as though she were nudging a friend who had dozed off at a sermon. Why, the best and most hopeful part of the evening still lay ahead. What was the matter with her? Was it possible that she was beginning to run down? After all these years, all these cruises, all these campaigns, was she beginning to lose her wind? What sort of nonsense was this, anyway?

Her head went back. Her spine straightened. She pushed herself up in the chair. Just because the first part of the evening had yielded no results, she had told herself severely, that didn't mean she

had to act as though the world had come to an end. She would stop this silly . . .

The fierce little pep talk slithered from her mind. Miss Cranston's eyes beheld a sight that froze her with horror. Coming across the room, heading directly for her, was the grinning, malevolent, inebriated countenance of Mr. Harvey Murdoch, of Pittsburgh.

For a long moment, as though she were already stunned by the impact of the blow that had not yet fallen, she could not believe what she was seeing.

Then her mind, taught by experience to believe anything—no matter how outrageous—of a pack wolf, leaped in a spasm of warning. There was some connection, there had to be, between Mr. Murdoch's mocking attempt to escort her from the dining saloon after dinner and his descent on her now.

It was probably some complicated practical joke by which he had decided to pay her back for the cutting truth she had hurled at him before dinner. Miss Cranston could not imagine what Mr. Harvey Murdoch intended to do to her. She knew only with terrifying urgency that she should not wait to find out.

"Excuse me," Miss Cranston said, rising hastily, "I am afraid I must leave." Even in her desperation she was aware that Mr. Bacon seemed to appreciate what was happening. In fact, Mr. Bacon seemed to be enjoying it.

Miss Cranston gasped, "I have another engagement."

Mr. Murdoch saw his quarry move towards the door. He emitted a little yelp and waved his arm encouragingly. A roar of laughter rose from the card players.

Miss Cranston, her face so hot that it hurt, sidestepped and managed to stumble through the door into the cool of the night. She didn't pause to gulp the fresh air for which her panting lungs hungered.

She kept right on going, up the deck, down the companion-way, along the corridor, and into her cabin.

Without a thought for the flaring skirt that had cost three weeks' salary, heedless of the fragile lace stole that had been grudgingly entrusted to her only after so many vows of tender care, Miss Cranston flung herself on her bunk, face down.

It has been recorded that Alexander wept when he learned there were no more worlds to conquer. Perhaps he did.

And perhaps Miss Cranston, lying on her face in a bunk on a cruise ship in the Atlantic Ocean, was doing the same. Certainly, the suspicious moisture that dampened her pillow could have been identified as tears. And yet the word seems somehow inadequate.

Not because Miss Cranston's warm and eager soul had never lustred for a world. Not because her long and ardent quest had always been of such simple and harmless dimensions.

The word seems inadequate because it is possible that there are no words to describe the brutal shattering of a will, the wanton destruction of a human being's valor, the ruthless quenching of an inner fire.

The struggle against insuperable odds is one thing. Miss Cranston had never shrunk from it. Man's inhumanity to man, and woman, is something else again. Miss Cranston, who had learned so much in her annual pilgrimages across blue water, had at last learned that, too.

She did not know how long she had been lying there when she heard the timid tap on the cabin door. She raised her tear-stained face from the sodden pillow.

"Yes?" she called in a dazed voice. "Who is it?"

"Marilyn?"

She recognised the nice, and now quite worried, tones of young Mr. Cartwell, of Chicago.

"No, she's not here," Miss Cranston called wearily. "Try the smoking lounge. She was in there playing canasta a few minutes ago."

"A few minutes ago?" Mr. Cartwell sounded startled. "Why, the game was over at ten-thirty."

Miss Cranston sat up on her bunk. "What time is it now?" she called frantically.

"Almost two o'clock," Mr. Cartwell said through the cabin door.

Miss Cranston, glancing hastily at her watch, saw with horror that he was right. Before she quite realised where she was and why she was there, her mind was already recording the lamentable fact that she had missed the amateur entertainment, the midnight costume contest, and, in all probability, the one o'clock dance on the forward deck.

By the time she realised why she had missed them, Miss Cranston's irritation with herself was far stronger than her recollections of the stunned misery to which Mr. Murdoch's drunken humours had reduced her.

Like a good soldier who awakes to find that he has dozed at his post, all her senses and energies seemed to become alerted at once. They strained, not backwards, with remorse

for her defection, but forward, to repair the damage done.

Miss Cranston, who had so much less time for everything than younger girls, had no time for remorse. Not at two o'clock in the morning on the last night of a sixteen-day cruise.

"I'll be up on deck in a minute," she called briskly to Mr. Cartwell. She ran across to the basin and started to pat cold water on her face. "With two of us looking for her, we ought to find her," she called.

She dried her face hastily, found her compact, and began swiftly to repair the ravages of a despair that seemed already so utterly preposterous that she could almost believe it had happened to another person. "Where will you be," she asked, fluffing out the skirt of her dress, "if I run into her first?"

"How about the lounge?" Mr. Cartwell's voice came from behind the closed door. "That all right?"

"Fine," Miss Cranston said. "If I locate that Marilyn of yours, I'll get her to the lounge if I have to carry her piggy-back."

"Thanks a lot." There was a pause. Then Mr. Cartwell's young and troubled voice said, "You know something, Miss Cranston?"

"What?"

"You're a peach."

"Go on, now," she called tartly. "And stop acting silly."

SOME peach, she thought irritably as she gave herself a rapid final glance in the mirror. After all these years, after all her experiences with the insect life of cruise ships, to allow herself to be driven from the most promising scenes of a last night by a pack wolf like that Mr. Murdoch, of Pittsburgh!

Honestly, it was enough to make a girl lose faith in herself. Miss Cranston seized her rhinestone purse and her flowing handkerchief. Still tugging the flaring skirt into better alignment, she trotted out of the cabin. Recalling, as she sped back along the corridor, the mood in which she had last covered this route, Miss Cranston blushed with shame for her weakness.

At the rail below the bridge she paused for breath and looked down on the forward deck. Four or five floodlights were still on, but the music had stopped and there were no couples on the dance floor. The upward climb of Miss Cranston's spirits stopped abruptly. She was too late. It was all over. The festivities were finished. And so, for another year, were her chances.

Dejectedly, forgetting to keep her shoulders back and the flowing handkerchief from trailing at her feet, she turned and walked aft. Moving along

the deck in the moonlight with dragging steps, she tried, as she had always tried in the past on similar occasions, to think. Not of the defeat, but of the lessons to be learned from it, of the pieces of knowledge that could be dredged up out of the defeat and added to her already ample store for future use, for the next year, the next cruise, the next captain's dinner, for the victory she had never doubted would one day come.

But she could dredge up no pieces of knowledge. Perhaps at last she had learned it all. Perhaps for her there would be no more lessons.

Perhaps, in succumbing to the terror of Mr. Murdoch's threatened mockery, she had succumbed to something from which there was no recovery. Perhaps for her there would never be a victory.

"Hey, Miss Cranston!"

She leaped nervously and turned. She was standing in the doorway of the saloon. Fifteen or twenty couples were sitting about, having a nightcap. In their midst, holding aloft a highball and his souvenir menu, was Mr. Harvey Murdoch, of Pittsburgh.

As she stared at the beefy face she saw, without looking at them directly, the spreading expectant grins of the people in the room. Again she almost wept with anguish. Why couldn't he leave her alone? Hadn't he done enough?

"Where you been hiding?" Mr. Murdoch bellowed. "I been looking for you all evening."

He winked at his delighted audience. "I've got everybody's autograph in my book except the one I want. You can't do this to Harvey Murdoch," he shouted, advancing towards her. "Come on, now, Miss Cranston. Make this wonderful cruise perfect for Harvey Murdoch. You got to write in my book."

For a moment, as the sea of grins became a rippling wave of smiles and started to break into the roaring surf of laughter, Miss Cranston wanted to turn and run.

The instinct, common enough to most people but still foreign even to the shatert Miss Cranston, struck her with the force of a physical blow.

It was as though, for the first time since she had fled from the smoking lounge, she had been granted a clear glimpse of herself, of the depths to which she had sunk. The sight was shocking. She reacted to it as only the old campaigner can be counted upon to react under stress.

The cruelty of the laughter stabbed and bit, searing its way down into regions of her heart that had never before been plumbed, touching off something Miss Cranston had never before felt for another human being.

Up through the layers of

weariness and rejection, out of the leaden manta of rebuff and defeat, it surged forth: a seething flame of anger, but anger channelled, anger under control, anger for this mischievous pack wolf who had hounded her all night, almost as though it were a deliberate plan: on deck before dinner, in the dining saloon after dinner, at canasta, and now here before this laughing audience.

Miss Cranston's shoulders went back. The trailing handkerchief came up. Miss Cranston, of Greenwich Village, would show Mr. Harvey Murdoch of Pittsburgh a thing or two about practical jokes. She would show him what it meant to bait innocent people, to make someone a public laughing stock.

"Why, of course," Miss Cranston said with airy grace, employing at last the weapon she had decided before dinner to save until later in the evening.

"I'll be delighted to write something in your book, Mr. Murdoch." She advanced calmly into the saloon. "What would you like me to write?"

Mr. Murdoch seemed to realise that he had apparently underestimated his victim that his crude humor was about to backfire. He cast an uncertain glance at the people around him.

The surf of laughter had retreated into a wave of smiles. The wave gave every indication of being about to recede farther to a sea of uneasy grins.

"Why, I'd like you to write something I'll never forget," Mr. Harvey Murdoch said. The words seemed to restore his confidence. "That's right," he cried. "I want you to write something you won't want Harvey Murdoch ever to forget."

"Let me think now," Miss Cranston said, still airily, still gracefully, but enunciating so



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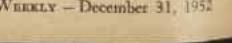
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Continuing . . .

The Invincible Miss Cranston

clearly that she could be heard by everybody in the now silent room. She put a forefinger to her cheek, dimpling it prettily, and she seemed to lose herself for a moment in deep thought.

"I know," she trilled. "I've just thought of something I won't want you ever to forget." She turned to the man nearest her. It was Mr. Cunliffe, of London. She said pleasantly, "May I borrow your pen?"

"Of course," Mr. Cunliffe said. He plucked it hastily from his pocket. As he handed it over, a look of grudging admiration began to take shape on his face. "There you are."

"Thank you," Miss Cranston said, as Mr. Murdoch held out to her his souvenir menu.

"Remember, now," Mr. Murdoch chortled. "It's got to be something you don't want me ever to forget."

"Oh, I'll remember," Miss Cranston said lightly. "The question is, will you remember?"

Leaning down, resting the booklet on Mr. Cunliffe's table, so that he and his neighbors could see clearly what she was doing, Miss Cranston wrote in the clear marching script that had for so many years helped make her an important member of the bookkeeping department of the Knickerbocker Box and Lumber Co., Inc.: "Isabel Cranston, 32 O'Duffy Street, New York, N.Y., Mohawk 4-8076."

She straightened up. As she recapped the fountain pen and returned it to Mr. Cunliffe she could see the grudging admiration on his face change to a frank stare of awe.

He murmured something to his neighbor. The murmur spread. A whisper of amusement slid through the room, mounted, and crashed into a roar of laughter. They had been willing to see her as the butt of a jester. Now it was evident what she thought of their jester—a cheap masher, a collector of telephone numbers.

This time Miss Cranston did not mind the laughter. This time she welcomed it. She closed the souvenir menu and slipped it behind the handkerchief in the outer breast pocket of Mr. Murdoch's dinner jacket. She did it with a gesture of graceful triumph. The room was laughing at Mr. Murdoch.

"You sure you won't want me to forget what you wrote, now?" he said uneasily.

"That's entirely up to you," Miss Cranston said coolly. "You'll never miss out if you get a long enough list."

The laughter roared out again. Mr. Murdoch winced and looked foolish. Miss Cranston sent her triumphant glance around the room, hunting for Mr. Murdoch's partner, Mr. Bacon, of Albany, who had grinned at her so maliciously at *cannasta*.

Miss Cranston, flushed with triumph, wanted to see if Mr. Bacon was grinning now. Her glance faltered. Mr. Murdoch sensed apparently that something had changed.

"What's the matter?" Mr. Murdoch said and laughed. "Want to change your mind about what you wrote?"

"Change my mind?" Miss Cranston said. "Oh, no." She didn't want to change her mind. She wanted desperately to get it to work again. Mr. Bacon, of Albany, was not in

the saloon. Neither was Miss Marilyn Paige, of Baltimore.

Their absence had reminded Miss Cranston of her promise to young Mr. Cartwell, of Chicago. He was still waiting for her in the lounge, under the impression that she was hunting for his Miss Paige.

"Of course not," Miss Cranston said, trying to think quickly, trying to assemble a number of pieces of the evening that she instinctively felt belonged together. "Why should I want to change my mind?"

"I don't know," Mr. Harvey Murdoch said, and he staggered as a spasm of laughter shook his large frame. "From the way you been running away from me all evening, I thought maybe you didn't like me."

"How silly!" Miss Cranston exclaimed. It was worse than silly. It was unforgivably stupid. The pieces had fallen into place, had become a pattern so clear and obvious that she was amazed to realize she had not seen it earlier.

Her moment of suspicion, when Mr. Murdoch had started to descend on her in the smoking lounge, that there was some connection between his impending assault and his earlier lumbering attempts to escort her from the dinner table had been justified.

This request for her to write something in his souvenir menu was part of the same plan. With her long and intimate knowledge of the habits of pack wolves, how could she possibly have overlooked the connection?

Of course it was a plan. Mr. Murdoch had obviously been detailed to keep her occupied and out of the way so that his partner, Mr. Bacon, could have a free hand with her cabin mate, Miss Paige. The silly fool!

For a moment Miss Cranston didn't know whether she had intended the epithet for herself or for Miss Paige. She felt that they both deserved it.

Miss Cranston's smile became dazzling. "How could you possibly have thought that, Mr. Murdoch?" she said, slipping her arm through his. "Why, of course I like you."

She regretted, more than anything she had ever regretted in her life, the seething anger of a few minutes ago. It was an emotion she had always distrusted. Now she knew she had always been right.

If she had not succumbed to anger she would not have forgotten her promise to Mr. Cartwell; she would have noticed at once the absence of Mr. Bacon; she would have understood immediately the danger that threatened the silly Miss Paige; she would not have lost precious minutes.

Miss Cranston reached out and plucked the sleeve of a passing steward. He stopped and turned. He was the one she had always thought was nice, the one with the gold tooth that showed when he smiled.

Miss Cranston said, "Would you get us two beers, please? And could you bring them out on deck for us?"

"You bet," the steward answered. The gold tooth was in full view now. "Right away, ma'am."

"Thank you," Miss Cranston said. "Come along, Mr. Murdoch," she said in clear bell-like tones. "Let's have a

nights out on deck and I'll tell you just how wrong you are in thinking I don't like you."

He was a heavy man and the amount of liquor he had consumed had not made him more manageable, but Miss Cranston was not slender, either. Besides, she was in a hurry. If she were to avert the disaster her stupidity had prevented her from seeing until now, she would have to work fast. If, indeed, she was not already too late.

A murmur of laughter followed her as she dragged Mr. Harvey Murdoch out on deck. Miss Cranston did not hear it. Her mind was making a swift calculation, adding minutes and subtracting them. How long had she been gone from her cabin? She could only hope. And act swiftly. Mr. Murdoch sagged against the rail.

"Say," he said, "you know something? You're nicer than I thought. I guess I owe you an apology for—for, well, you know. I didn't mean anything. I was just trying to—to—"

He shook his head as though to free it of the fumes that impeded the formation of a

too bad about Mr. Murdoch. Perhaps what he needed after all was a little shock treatment. It seemed to take effect.

She added, "If you still remember, you might try telling me in the morning before the ship docks."

She sped up the deck, down the companionway, along the passage, and into her corridor. Her heart was pounding with fear as she turned the knob on the door of her cabin. It was not locked! She pushed open the door and snapped on the light. The cabin was empty! Almost sagging with relief, Miss Cranston closed the door behind her and tried to dismiss her last fragments of doubt.

Her calculations had to be right. She couldn't be wrong. She knew too much about last nights of cruises, about the innocence of young girls like Miss Marilyn Paige, about the techniques of pack wolves. She couldn't possibly be wrong. And yet—

Miss Cranston turned. Outside, coming down the corridor, were the unmistakable sounds of the age-old struggle. Her heart leaped with grati-



"YOU HAVE JUST HEARD a John Philip Sousa military march, the time now is . . ."

slow, lumbering, and apparently important thought.

"Funny thing about these cruises," Mr. Harvey Murdoch said thickly. "You rush around so fast, raising Cain for sixteen days, sometimes you miss the best—I mean—" he made a determined effort to bring Miss Cranston into focus—"I never really looked at—"

Miss Cranston turned to the approaching steward.

"Would you do me a favor, please?"

"You bet, ma'am."

"We don't really want the drinks," Miss Cranston said. "I ordered them just to get Mr. Murdoch out of the saloon. He's had more than enough. What he needs is sleep. Would you take him down to his cabin?"

The gold tooth flashed in the moonlight. "You bet, ma'am," the steward said.

Miss Cranston smiled. She was never wrong about people. He was the nicest of the stewards. He set down the small tray and relieved her of the large, swaying body.

"Hey!" Mr. Murdoch called, his voice a wavering, receding protest. "I want to talk to you," he mumbled. "I been trying to tell you something. What I mean is, what I'm trying to say, I mean—"

"I know what you mean," Miss Cranston called back across her shoulder. It was

tude. Her calculations had been right. Her instincts had been correct.

A girl like Miss Paige, silly though she was, would not go to a man's cabin. The man, if he had any experience, would understand that and try instead to manoeuvre a girl like Miss Paige to her own cabin.

Swiftly, almost savagely, Miss Cranston pulled the bobbin pins out of her carefully arranged hair. It would take ages to fix it again. Miss Cranston didn't care. When the door opened, her hair was tumbled loosely on her shoulders and she was holding a toothbrush.

"Oh, hello," she said brightly to Mr. Bacon, of Albany, and to Miss Marilyn Paige, of Baltimore. "I was just about to turn in. Have fun?"

The gasp of relief with which Miss Marilyn Paige freed her hand from Mr. Bacon's clutch and stumbled into the room was a trifle pitiful but also highly satisfactory to hear. It told Miss Cranston what she wanted to know. She was not too late.

"Oh yes, it was—it was very nice," Miss Paige stammered. She turned to face Mr. Bacon in the doorway, then stepped back behind Miss Cranston.

Speaking across the protective barrier of the older girl's shoulder, Miss Marilyn Paige

said with surprising firmness, since her voice was quivering, "Thank you very much, Mr. Bacon, and good-night."

Mr. Bacon did not answer. It was possible that he would be incapable of speech for some time.

He glared at Miss Cranston, who patted Miss Paige's hand reassuringly and walked to the door.

"I think you heard my cabin mate," said Miss Cranston. "She said good-night. Miss Cranston raised her hand like a cavalryman drawing his sabre and she pointed the toothbrush at Mr. Bacon's rumpled dinner jacket.

"Before you go, let me give you a bit of advice you might be able to use on future cruises," she said. "Next time, stick to girls your own age," Miss Cranston said, emphasizing her point with a thrust of the toothbrush. "And next time, when you pick a partner to cover up for you," the toothbrush sank into Mr. Bacon's midriff, "make sure it's someone who can stay on his feet!"

She slammed the door in Mr. Bacon's furious face. For a moment she stood there, waiting. Then, as she heard his heavy angry frustrated steps retreating up the corridor, Miss Cranston turned to face Miss Marilyn Paige, of Baltimore. The young girl, no longer resplendent because her black tulle and gleaming silver were mussed beyond splendor, nevertheless seemed lovelier than ever.

"I wish we'd spent more time together. Now that I think of it," she said, not because she was unkind or even thoughtless, but because she was twenty and the sense of responsibility to others was still new to her, "you haven't had a very good time, have you?"

"Oh, I don't know," Miss Cranston said, remembering what, in her moment of angry retaliation, she had written in Mr. Murdoch's souvenir menu. Perhaps, when she had defended him, when during the past sixteen days she had murmured to other passengers that Mr. Murdoch probably had troubles, poor man, like everybody else, perhaps she had been more than merely kind.

Remembering what he had tried to tell her so incoherently on the deck a few minutes ago, Miss Cranston was suddenly convinced she had been right. All Mr. Murdoch, of Pittsburgh, needed was some help and Miss Cranston, of Greenwich Village, did not mean the kind of help he and Mr. Bacon, of Albany, had been giving each other for sixteen days.

"Don't you worry about me," Miss Cranston said cheerfully. She smiled at Miss Marilyn Paige, of Baltimore. "I can't complain."

Even if Mr. Murdoch would not remember to tell her, in the morning before the ship docked, what he had tried to tell her a few minutes ago on deck, she was pretty sure he would remember to tell her, and probably say it better, in a letter from Pittsburgh.

That souvenir menu was safely tucked in his pocket and nobody, not even Mr. Murdoch, could fail to make out her clear, legible handwriting.

"I've had a perfectly wonderful time," Miss Cranston said, feeling a surge of her old confidence and, more importantly, a delicious tremor of something completely new, something she had never experienced but for which she had waited so long: the imminence of victory.

"You go along and find your nice Mr. Cartwell and stop worrying about me," Miss Isabel Cranston said happily. "I'll get by."

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By DALE COLLINS

of us are bores except to ourselves—hence clubs.

I digress. To return to the devil.

The afternoon was grey and presaged a foggy night.

Parker had made up the fire, but the room was chill with the darkness which comes when another day dies—yet another day!

The room, as I have described it, changed entirely with the entry of the devil. It became warm and alive, it glowed. I might have been sitting in the sunshine on the terrace at Monte Carlo, a fullblooded young cockerel with a pretty poule beside me. A remarkable transformation to happen in Lowndes Square, where, even though seemly, life is placid and humdrum.

"Good afternoon," he said, his tone a touch too velvety for my ear, but one forgave it on account of his accent. "I have called to see if I can buy your soul."

"Naturally that would be your business." Absurd had he been there for any other reason, out of keeping, bizarre. There was that touch of the bizarre about him, as I have indicated, but never a man more in character, more wholly himself.

"Excuse me rising—the gout, you know."

"Poor man's gout, of course." He said it with genuine sympathy, with none of the crude humor the complaint often evokes.

His tone held no irony, his smile was as gentle as a father's looking on his ailing first-born. When he smiled he became really beautiful. No woman could have resisted him. Nor could I, the most normal of men.

"—And none the less painful!"

"But unless I misjudge you," he said, and never was flattery more welcome, "you'll be in C24 to-night!"

Surprisingly it didn't surprise me that he should know the number of my seat at Covent Garden. In my modest way I am a judge of people and I had accepted him as a most knowledgeable type.

"That is my intention. I should hate to miss Boronsky."

"His voice, at least, is admirable," said the devil civilly, without commenting on Boronsky's impersonation of himself.

"I take it you've had tea?"

"With a most charming hostess."

I resisted the temptation to ask if I knew her. He had, I was sure, a nice sense of professional etiquette.

"A cigar?"

"Thank you—yes."

Piercing it with the pearly nail of his

little finger, he did not take off the band. Somehow I had known he wouldn't.

On the other hand, he lit it with a match in the normal way instead of playing any Maskelyne and Devant magic like passing it before the fire-coals of his eyes. Nor did he draw on it in ruthless schoolboy style. He tasted it gently as a man should.

"Excellent," he remarked in quiet appreciation.

I favored him even more. Continentals can be connoisseurs. I pride myself on my cigars. From Higginbotham's, of course.

"Now to business," I said briskly, when he had settled comfortably in the other chair: legs crossed, at ease but not lounging ostentatiously as I fear has become too much the habit to-day. I could have wished his shoes, which pointed at me, had been of a darker tan and more substantial leather.

"Yes, to business." He conveyed his pleasure to be dealing with a practical man who could get down to brass tacks.

"Tell me—for in my own prosaic way I've sometimes pondered the point—have a soul to sell?"

"Oh, certainly," he said quietly, sensibly. "And as they go, a fair sample. Otherwise I shouldn't be here."

The point was neat, and I nodded.

"Then let's grant, sir, I have a commodity for which you're in the market. May I ask why you want to buy my soul?"

The devil's face took on a look of most delightful chagrin and perplexity. From the suave man of the world he became in the instant a little boy puzzled by a sum.

"You have me huffed there," he said with disarming candor. "I really don't know. It's become a habit, I suppose, it's my trade and I know no other. You should be able to understand that, since your way of living is to deal on the stock exchange."

"Ah, yes," I said promptly, for now that we were talking business I was as good as the devil any day. "I buy, but I sell also. That's where half my profit comes in. How does yours? Where do you sell?"

The little puzzled boy became a sad, old, old, disillusioned man. I have never seen anybody so quick at such changes.

"That's the devil of it," he confessed. "There's no profit for me, there's no demand for what I buy once I've bought it. It may annoy them up there, but what good does it do me? I can't get rid of the stuff; I'm left holding the baby. It isn't as if I were an amateur, a collector of curiosities. I might

THE devil came into my room, which was known as the library or father's den, on the afternoon of November 11, 1913. The tea-tray was still on the small table near my chair, waiting for Parker to take it away in due course.

I had just lit a cigar. I recognised the devil at once because he was as conventional as he would have been at a masquerade.

The long, saturnine face, the eyes like coals, the dark jowls, the flared brows, the twisted and sardonic mouth—they were all there. Also the suavity and the fiendish power, the cunning and the wicked charm, the man-of-the-world smoothness and poise.

His skin was olive, his hands long and strong like a sculptor's—greedy, too, hungry as those of Judas when he took the pieces of silver. They were also as eloquent as those of the late Sir Henry Irving.

He was very Latin and, indeed, might well have come straight from Rome. No bigotry is revealed by this. I mean merely that one sees the particular type quite often in the Eternal City and on the Continent.

He did not wear a tail or hoods or a scarlet cloak, but clothes which accorded with his general appearance—those clothes which ape our English styles.

There was no cut about them, no quality; they were subtly wrong. The shoulders were too long and raised, the coat too loose; something was amiss quite definitely about the hang of the trousers. His shoes were white, allied with a peculiar and unhappy yellow, toe pointed, and not hand-made.

His cravat was over colorful without

achieving the distinction which alone justifies those who indulge in such gestures.

In all: a foreigner.

Had one seen him on the boulevards, Unter den Linden, or the square of St. Mark's, one would have accepted him as just that and let it go, acknowledging with a liberal outlook that all men were not Englishmen and that their attire need not necessarily be made in the seemliness and correctness of Bond Street or Savile Row.

My eldest boy, in the navy, has a saying: Different ships, different long splices. I have always thought this sound and admirable. I recalled it now.

The Englishman may be tailor-made, but in other parts of the world, despite the gilt claims of their garish shop fronts, they have not English cutters.

If I make the devil out to have appeared to me as a ridiculous person, the sin is only in my clumsiness and I apologise. I have need to be circumspect. And yet, have I? He cannot harm me more.

Nevertheless, there are decencies to be observed as between master and servant, though the fact seems to be dropping out of mind in these degenerate days.

The moment I clapped eyes on him he created the impression of being the most attractive, interesting, and unusual person I had ever met, and, allowing for the Latin shoddiness, for which he could not be blamed, a very cultured gentleman.

True, one might not have cared to have him as a guest at the club, but if one faced it in the privacy of the mind any civilised bore fitted in there extraordinarily well. A club is a gregarious place and I suppose most

It's the Devil's job to buy human souls, but if he wants to buy yours, take care! He knows all the tricks of the trade.

"Of course," I said, "it comes back to me: you were Lucifer."

"Young Lucifer—just a kid. You should have seen me then."

"I do."

He looked naively pleased with himself, the boy conjurer whose trick has come off.

"I'm still clever, aren't I? These transformations, I mean—I was always brilliant and always shall be. That was the root of all evil so far as I was concerned. The old Hebrews were right. He is a jealous God. You mustn't try to be clever with Him. Do you recall when you first went into the city as a very junior junior?"

I did indeed. It seemed like yesterday.

"You were anxious to get on and build a business. You felt that you could run the business very much better than the stuffy old boss if only you had the chance?"

"I was never more sure of anything."

"Just my case. God was so antique to my eyes—then I fancied the time had come when Youth should have a chance. I was the younger generation knocking at the door. Naturally I see now that I was wrong—indeed, crazy: for who would want to be God? But at that age it was only angelic to be ambitious and cherish dreams and high hopes. "My fate was what yours would have been had you had the foolhardy courage of your convictions and thumbed a nose at the boss. They sacked me; they threw me out. You can see that engraving in your nursery book which showed me falling down, down, down, can't you?"

"Why, yes—headlong, the feathers coming out of your lovely white wings. It always made me feel sick in the stomach."

He grinned in rueful fashion.

"Me, too. Even more so. And I've been sick at heart over since. Because they weren't content just to throw me out—they rubbed sugar into my wounds and bruises by making me the Prince of Evil—and I've never given a hoot either way for good or evil. Like any other young intellectual, my feeling was that there was neither."

"Sin," he went on bitterly. "What did I care about sin? And I cared even less about the silly world and you silly humans. I hated, and hate, the lot of you. Not in the sense that I want your beastly souls cluttering up hell, I merely hate you in a cold, arctic, dispassionate way, because you're so dull and useless and futile."

For a moment he paused and put his cigar in the ash-tray.

Then continued: "Admittedly, I'm better off than certain other quarters where they give themselves airs, for bad men are better company than good ones, and that's even more the case with the ladies. But humans! Humans! I would that I traded in ants and bees or lions and boa-constrictors. There's power and interest in them. But humans! Bah, why should I be involved with such kittle-kattle?"

"Why?" I echoed apologetically. It would have been less than human when he put his case so earnestly.

"Ask me another," said the devil. "How I sigh for the night when the round-faced silly moon meets again with this stupid little planet and in that happy embrace the whole lot of you are abolished."

"So that's to be the end of it?" I asked.

We lit another cigar. He left the band on and smiled at me in quiet mockery. He also glanced down at his shoes, which continued to irk me.

"Not in your time, nor your children's, nor their children's children's. But, alas, in my time, which stretches on and on and on until parallel lines meet."

"And when moon and earth collide?"

He shrugged.

"I shall be out of a job, I assume. And nobody will be happier, for there's no worse job than mine—always excepting God's."

That was quite an interesting angle, and I should have liked to go into it, but it occurred to me that Parker would be in soon, and owing to my disability it would take me longer than usual to bath and dress before dinner and the opera. It has become the fashion to look down on Faust as hackneyed. I do not find it so. The theme has always appealed to me and the music is delightful. What could be more tuneful than the Jewel Song?

"I do not offer you Marguerite as a bribe," the devil chimed in with my unspoken thoughts. "I am too wise for that. You found your Marguerite, with or without my aid, long ago in Paris. And another version in Vienna. Another in Brighton.

"I make no claim on you for such pretty trifles. If I produced someone better than any of them I couldn't tempt you these times. As humans go, you are sensible. That's why you interest me. Even Venus in her rosy-bud springtime couldn't lure you this afternoon to demonstrate that there's no fool like an old fool."

I tugged my moustache, so silver now.

"You're devilish wise," I smiled. "I have left games with Venus almost as far behind as games with marbles."

"I have always contended," he remarked with a courteous little bow, "that the much-mocked business man very often is wiser than the clever ones who caricature him. Basically, that is. You are a good example, sir. And so the bid I make for your soul is one calculated to appeal to you."

"Let's hear it," I said, glancing at the clock. "These abstractions we've been discussing are not without interest, but business is business, and, though time lags for you, it goes all too fast for me. Much faster than it used to, very much faster. Let's have your offer."

"You are not a young man and have enough sense to realise that your life is as good as ever, but you have a family: four fine boys, four beautiful girls. Now—"

"I must ask you, sir," I cut in firmly and finally, "to leave my family out of this. You came for my soul, and I won't have—"

He checked me with a kindly but imperious gesture.

"What sort of a cad do you think I am, sir?" he demanded. "What sort of an idiot—that I could imagine you so base? Your children have souls to call their own, or that is their fond belief. They are certainly not yours to buy or sell," he said indignantly.

"No, sir, my proposition is based on the very fact that you love them, and it's that sincere love which gives me my lever."

Special Holiday Fiction

"In this grey hour of a grey afternoon you were sitting there, sir, thinking that you'd give anything to look ahead, say, a matter of forty years and see what came of their lives and how they'd fared—the people you called out of the void. Whether Elspeth's passionate nature had led her; whether Harry's violence and reckless courage had landed him in trouble or made him a hero.

"You have studied them all so carefully, rather with the admiring bewilderment of the hen that hatched out the duck's egg. You know each of them, and you know none of them, though they're your own creations. You haven't a clue as to what life will do to them or they to life."

"That is in very truth is so, sir, and I have to admire your acumen, for even as you came in the very thoughts you mention occupied me. Congratulations! I see you believe in striking when the iron is hot."

"For me," he pointed out, "the iron is always hot."

"Yes, what's going to happen to my children is the only problem that still interests me. At the end of a long life I find that most of the riddles remained unsolved, but I have ceased to care and vex myself. Better minds than mine can wrestle with them. Your bid takes my fancy, as well you knew it would."

"I don't deny it," he said.

"Sir," I decided, "you can have my soul if I can look forward into 1952 and see what has chanced to my four boys and four girls."

"It's a deal then."

"Hold on, though," I checked myself. "This is a serious matter. I have my wife to think of. You don't want my soul at this very minute—spot cash on the nail, as it were? Or even at thirty days?"

"Why, no, no," he soothed. "You're a good fellow, and I wouldn't drive a hard bargain

with you. No, no—you will die presently, as all flesh must—which, to my way of thinking, is the chief advantage of being human and only then do I take up my option."

"Come, that's fair enough," I admitted.

"The devil is always fair. He can afford to be." No evil in his chuckle: only excellent good humor. "I wonder are you at fair?"

He considered me shrewdly, without malice. "You think you are making a very smart bargain, since you're by no means sure that you've anything to sell, and have reached the age of reason where you don't believe in heaven, or hell, or me. You feel, in a clumsy phrase, that you're selling nothing to nobody and buying your heart's desire."

I had to laugh. He was such a charming and knowing and logical rascal.

"Why not? You came without an appointment and the proposition emanates entirely from you. If I prove a clever businessman it won't be for the first time."

"Not by any means," he said with a droll look. "There was the matter of—but let bygones be bygones. I do not need to dun you for old debts. Your guess in this deal may be right, as it has been so profitably in the past, but I warn you the difference now is that I am not guessing. I know what I know, having learnt in the hard school. I am the devil, and in very truth chairman of the board of hell, alack!"

"Come, sir, Parker will be here at any moment. Would you be in 1952 with power to see at one swift glance how it fares with the children?"

"My answer is, yes," I said it firmly, gravely, though I was smiling up my sleeve because Old Nick is just a shadow with which I think inadvertently—namely frighten their innocent charges.

In Latin fashion he raised eloquent shoulders and went through the motions of washing his hands of the whole business, leaving it as entirely my responsibility.

He didn't indulge in any melodramatic passes or mumbo-jumbo. He said in quite a normal tone: "It is 1952."

Who sups with the devil needs a long spoon.

Yet I can't claim he cheated me, for he kept his side of our contract of sale. The error was mine.

They were all dead, each one of them.

My eldest, Harry, had gone down with his destroyer at Jutland, and Tom had died at Mons. In the later war, Edward had left his bones to bleach in the desert sands of Africa, and the green jungle things of Burma had rotted Richard away.

The passionate and dangerous Elspeth, happily and safely married to the man she loved with all her ardent soul, had died in childbirth, her boy baby with her.

Consumption had claimed frail Jane in a sanatorium in Switzerland, and a bomb which fell out of the black sky on this very house had smashed Mary into eternity, just as the crash in a flying machine had abolished little, laughing Joy when she was smiling over a glass of sherry at a likely-looking youngster with red hair.

They were all dead, as dead as their parents.

My father's house has many mansions, and the dead outnumber the living a millionfold. Whether I shall ever meet them again I know not, but where the fiendish ingenuity of the devil's snare comes in is that I have to hope and pray that they will be with their mother and that I shall never, never see any of them again.

Boronsky was in fine voice at the opera, and acted as well as one can expect. My dear wife wondered why I was so restless and distract, but put it down to the gout.

With the evidence of human ears and eyes to confute me, I couldn't explain that I found Boronsky out of tune and spurious in his crimson cape and heavy make-up.

The devil, as I know him, is a specious rogue who might well operate on the Paris bourse. He is also a cruel and wicked fellow to drive such a bargain with a tired old man who only loved too well. He may appreciate your cigars, but you cannot trust him.

So there it is.

(Copyright)

"You should have enough sense to realise your life is nearly over," my visitor pointed out.

as well paper the wall with the scrip, but having some artistic sense I can't even do that. Human souls aren't what you could call decorative."

I looked into myself and replied, "I see what you mean."

And thought a while, because this was all quite interesting and, though we phrased the matter happily in business terms, it was rather outside the run of ordinary business, at least in my case.

"You seem to be in a very unhappy position," I concluded.

"Oh, most—!" He looked even older and more tired. "You haven't a notion."

"Then why do you go on?"

"Why do you?"

"Mine is the only job I know. If I retired all I could do would be to die at Tunbridge Wells or at Aix-les-Bains drinking those sulphurous waters."

"My situation to a degree, but mine is much worse. I share your dislike for the Wells and Aix, though in the way of trade I have to make dull calls at both. As for sulphur—!"

He gave me a faint smile, that of a wit who apologises for a joke unworthy of him. "The difference is that I can't retire. Life for me is one long crucifixion."

As an Anglican his use of the word shocked me a little, yet he spoke it quite naturally, and even with an inner dignity, a sadness which in some fashion was outside his own problem.

We were silent briefly while I considered the sad lot of the devil.

"If I were in your place," I said, "I would get out from under and let hell go to—well—hell!" I smiled in apology, much as he had a moment before, only, of course, in my inadequate human way.

"Easy to say, my friend, but utterly impossible. I am more doomed and damned than any of my subjects. And all for a boy-hood's lapse! The marvel is that the injustice of it hasn't made me even more bitter than I am. There was I, a shining and care-free lad, strumming along and chumming along in the halls of gold and pearl and alabaster. Ah, I was proud and I was beautiful. Remember, I was much younger then and not disillusioned."

He suffered another change, shedding the weary centuries, becoming more the pattern of a young god than any the Greeks carved in marble.

GIANT

By
**EDNA
FERBER**

Special Holiday Fiction



OUR GREAT NEW SERIAL TO BE COMPLETED IN FOUR LONG PARTS

Famous author of "Showboat" gives us a powerful drama of human emotions, set against a vast Texas background.

THIS March day the vast and brassy sky, always spangled with the silver glint of aeroplanes, roared and glittered with celestial traffic. Gigantic though they loomed against the white hot heavens, there was nothing martial about these winged mammoths. They were merely private vehicles, bearing nice little alligator jewel-cases and fabulous gowns and overbred furs.

No sordid freight sullied these four-engined family jobs whose occupants were Dallas or Houston or Vientecito or Waco women in Paris gowns from Neiman-Marcus; and men from Amarillo or Corpus Christi or San Angelo or Benedict in boots and Stetsons and shirt sleeves.

All Texas was flying to Jett Rink's party. All Texas, that is, possessed of more than ten millions in cash, or cattle, or cotton, or wheat, or oil.

Thus was created an aerial stampede. Monarchs in a Jovian quadrille, the plains converged from the Timber Belt and the Rio Grande Valley, from the Llano Estacado and the Trans-Pecos; the Blacklands, the Balcones Escarpment, the Granite Mountains, the Central Plains, the Edwards Plateau, the boundless Panhandle.

High, high they soared above the skyscraper office buildings that rose idiotically out of the endless plain; above the sluggish rivers and the arroyos, above the lush new hotels and the anachronistic white-pillared mansions; the racehorses in rich pasture, the swimming-pools, the drives of transplanted palms, the huge motion-picture palaces, the cattle herds, and the sheep and mountains, and wild antelope, and cottonfields, and Martian chemical plants whose aluminum stacks gave back the aeroplanes glitter for glitter. And above the grey, dust-bitten shanties of the Mexican barrios, and the roadside barbecue shacks, and the windmills, and the waterholes, and the miles of mesquite and cactus.

A half-century earlier the American robber baron enjoyed the plush luxury of private railroad trains for his jaunts. The Texas cattle, oil, or cotton king had his private DC-6.

There were, of course, a few partygoers so conservative or so sure of their position in society, or even so impecunious as to make the journey by automobile, choosing to cover the distance at a leisurely ninety miles an hour along the flat concrete ribbon that spanned the thousand miles of Texas from north horizon to the Gulf.

Though the pitiless south-west sun glared down on the airborne and the groundling, it met defeat in the vine-veiled verandah of Reata Ranch Main House. Even the everpresent Gulf wind arriving dry and dust-laden after its journey from the coast here took on a pretence of cool moisture as it filtered through the green and spacious shade.

Cushions and palest pastel sailcloth on couches and chairs refreshed the eye even before the heat-tortured body found comfort, and through the day there was always the tinkle of ice against glass to soothe the senses. Through the verdant screen one caught glimpses of a heaven-blue swimming-pool and actually, too, a lake in this arid land.

Radios yelped and brayed from automobiles and ranch houses, towns, and cities throughout the length and breadth of this huge and lonely commonwealth from the Gulf of Mexico to the Oklahoma border, from the Rio Grande to Louisiana, but here at Reata Ranch no such raucous sounds intensified the heatwaves.

Jett Rink's name splintered the air everywhere else, but not here. It stalked in black three-inch headlines across the front page of every newspaper from El Paso to Bowie. It stared out from billboards and newscasts. It was emblazoned on the very heavens in skywriting. Omnipresent, like Jett Rink's oil derricks straddling the land.

At every turn the ears and eyes were assaulted by the stale and contrived news of Jett Rink's munificence.

The JETT RINK AIRPORT . . . gift of JETT RINK to the city of Hermosa . . . biggest airport in the south-west . . . private pre-opening celebra-

"It's caught up with you," Leslie said, glancing up from the boy to her husband. "It's caught up with us. It always does."

tion . . . two thousand invited guests . . . magnificent banquet in the Grand Concours . . . most important citizens . . . champagne . . . motion-picture stars . . . name bands . . . millions . . . first Texas billionaire . . . orchids . . . caviare flown from New York . . . millions . . . lobster flown from Maine . . . millions . . . oil . . . strictly private . . . millions . . . biggest millions biggest billions biggest trillions biggest trillions . . .

Mrs. Bick Benedict, dressed for the air journey—blue shantung and no hat—sat in her bedroom at Reata Ranch, quiet, quiet. She sat very relaxed in the cool chintz slipper chair, her long slim hands loosely clasped in her lap.

The quiet and the cool laved her. She sat storing coolness and the quiet against the time when her senses would be hammered and racked by noise and heat; big men and bourbon, the high shrill voices of Texas women, blare of brass, crash of china, odors of profuse food, roar of plane motors.

Now, as she sat, little sounds came faintly to her ears, little accustomed soothing sounds. A light laugh from the far-off kitchen wing—one of the Mexican girls, Delfina probably, the gay careless one, the others were more serious about their work. The clip-anip of Dimodeo's garden shears—Dimodeo and his swarming crew who seemed to spend their days on their knees clip-snipping, coaxing fine grass to grow green, and hedges to flower and water to spurt in this desert country. The muffled thud of a horse's hoofs on sunbaked clay; one of the vaqueros who still despised the jeep as a means of locomotion. The clang of a bell, deep-throated, resonant, an ancient bell that announced the nooning at Reata Ranch schoolhouse. The soft plaint of the mourning doves.

The town of Benedict, bustling and thriving, lay four miles distant, but here at Reata Ranch Main House, set back a mile from the highway, there was no sound of traffic or commerce.

ILLUSTRATED BY
DUNLOP

of quiet, suspended for the moment before it must burst at the onslaught of high-pitched voices and high-powered

motors. For all the family was going, and all the guests up at the huge Guest House there at the other end of the drive. The big plane was in readiness at Reata Ranch airfield, and the big cars were waiting to take them all to the plane.

The giant kingdom that was Reata Ranch, lay dozing in the sun, its feet laved by the waters of the Gulf of Mexico, many miles distant, its head in the cloud-wreathed mountains far, far to the north, its Gargantuan arms flung east and west in careless might.

Though they had been only an hour on the road, the thought of this verdant haven tormented Mrs. Mott Snyth as she and her husband wore with cycloramic speed past miles and miles of Reata fence and field and range. The highway poured into the maw of the big car, the torrid wind seared the purpling face of Vashti Snyth and—now that he had removed his big cream hat—tossed the little white curls that so incongruously crowned the lined and seemingly guileless face of Pinky, her husband.

Vashti Snyth's vast bosom heaved, her hands fluttered with the vague almost infantile gestures of the hyperthyroid.

"My!" she whimpered in helpless repetition. "My! It's a hot of a day!"

"March, what do you expect?" The tiny high-heeled boot on the accelerator, the small strong hands on the wheel, the bland blue eyes seeming focused on nothing in particular, he appeared relaxed, almost lethargic; those eyes saw everything to the right, to left, and ahead, he was as relaxed as a steel spring.

"Reata looks good. Salubrious. Bick must have had the stinger over this section again, not a mesquite far's you can see."

"Mott, let's stop by the house a minute, can't we?" This massive woman alone called him by his given name, though to the rest of the world he was Pinky; she actually gave the effect of looking up at him, though her elephantine bulk towered above his miniature frame; and, in spite of the fact (or perhaps because of it) that she as Vashti Hake, inheritor of the third biggest ranch in all Texas,

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had twenty years ago committed the unpardonable social crime of marrying one of her father's cow hands.

"Not if you're going to do a lot of shopping in Hermoso before we check in at the hotel, we can't. Mathematically speaking."

"I'm only going to buy a little white mink cape throw."

"How long will that take?"

"Fifteen minutes."

"You said you didn't want to take the plane. You said you wanted to drive because the bluebonnets would be so pretty. It'll take us another five hours anyway to get to Hermoso. The dinner is seven. How do you figure?"

"I'm sick of bluebonnets. They're right pretty, but I'm sick of 'em miles back. We can leave the car at Reata, hitch a ride in the big plane with Les and Bick."

"How do you know?"

"They're taking their big plane. I know. That's why I didn't want to fly down. You wouldn't take the big plane. I won't come down in that little bitty old two-engine job, front of everybody in Texas."

"We'd look good, wouldn't we, just the two of us sitting in the four-engine job hold fifty! Crew of four, gas and all, cost us five thousand dollars to go four hundred miles."

"What of it?"

"How do you know how many they got going? Maybe they're full up!"

"Company, of course, up at the Guest House. But not more than ten or twenty, usually. Then there's Bick and Leslie and young Jordy and his wife probably and Luz!"

"Thought she was at school in Switzerland somewhere."

"She quit it. Didn't like it."

"Like it! I should think if anybody didn't like it it'd be Bick. Heard her schooling there was costing him a heifer a day."

"Well, anyway, she's home and tearing up the place as usual, driving the jeeps like they were quarter horses, they say. Jumping mesquites with 'em, practically. But that's neither here nor there. Mott, I want to see what Leslie's wearing."

The cool blue eyes turned from their task of pouring the road into the car to glance briefly at the beige mound palpitating beside him. "Whatever Leslie's wearing I want to tell you it's away yonder better than that sorry outfit you're carrying."

"Why Mott Snyth! This! What's wrong with it?"

"Plain. Plain as a fence post."

"Plain is the smart thing this year," Vashni boomed with the hauteur of one who knows her ground. "Shows what you men know. Neat, and plain, and expensive. Ask anybody. Ask Leslie. Nobody in Texas or anywhere knows better than Leslie what's being worn, she doesn't have to be told, she knows by instinct, the way you can pick a horse. Simple and girlish"—she flicked an imaginary speck off her big beige bosom—"is the keynote of this year's styles."

A flash of amusement wrinkled Pinky's guileless face. "Simple and girlish is all right for Leslie, maybe, ganted the way she is. But you're packing plenty tallow, Vash."

Mischievously he pronounced the abbreviation of her name so that it became a French noun unfattering to her figure. She heard, she understood, she chose momentarily to ignore it. Blandly she resumed her description of the mode of the day.

"Everything but jewellery, that is. You're supposed to wear a hunk of a bracelet like this one I got on, no matter what, even with a sweater or a cotton wash dress. And a big clip with a lot of good stones or a flock of diamond or ruby or sapphire scatter pins is smart worn just stuck somewhere offhand like you'd jab safety-pins into the front of your dress changing a baby. But not even your engagement ring."

"How about wedding rings, Vash? Wedding rings still okay?"

"Oh, sure. But no other jewellery daytimes. Only evenings."

He threw intense anxiety into his tone. "You got stuff with you, I hope?"

"Mott Snyth, I got enough rocks in that little bitty old handbag back there. I'll bet if they take us on board Bick and the crew'll have to jettison some before they can lift the plane up in the air. Yes, sir! To-night I'm really going to rise and shine!"

Again Pinky Snyth turned a brief instant to survey the tentlike mound beside him. His glance was affectionate and possessive.

"Ruffles," he said. "I like ruffles on a female. But no matter what you wear you're sassy. You're as sassy as pink shoes."

Vashni, taking advantage of this rare approval, pressed her point. "Well, then, we'll stop by like I said, see who's going and all; and maybe catch a ride. And let me tell you, Mott Snyth, don't you go calling me Vash, like that, front of company. You and I ain't the only two in Texas know the French for cow. And one compliment don't cover an insult, either." But she was smiling upon him indulgently.

"Look! There's the tower of the Big House. I bet it's crammed with company. We're not a mile away from the ranch."

"No place in all of Texas," Pinky announced, without bitterness, "is more than a mile away from Reata Ranch somewhere."

Vashni bridled. "We are so! House to house we're more than ninety miles."

"House to house maybe. But fence lines, that's what counts. Fence lines you adjoin as you know well and good. Like I said, nothing's a fair piece from Reata, including Oklahoma one side and Mexico another, and the Gulf and Louisiana throwed in. Here we are. My, those palms have took hold. Never know they'd been set in."

Any Texas overhearing this artless chit-chat would have known that these two were talking Texas. Both had had a decent education, yet their conversation sounded like the dialogue in a third-rate parody of Texans. This was due partly to habit and partly to affectation born of a mixture of superiority and inferiority,

as a certain type of Englishman becomes excessively Oxford or a Southern politician intensifies his drawl.

Each was playing a role, deliberately. It was part of the Texas ritual. We're rich but look how homely we are, just as plain-folksy as grand-pappy back in 1836. We know about champagne and caviar but we talk hog and hominy.

They turned in at the open gateway with the Reata Ranch brand, the lariat — la reata as the Mexican vaquero wove it himself out of rawhide — copied in artful iron as an ornament for the gateposts. You saw its twists and coils over the gatehouse, too, as it could be seen a thousand thousand times throughout this ranch empire with its millions of acres.

Over the door of the Main House, the Big House, countless bunkhouses, line houses; burned into the hide of hundreds of thousands of bulls, steers, cows, calves; embroidered on the silks of the jockeys who rode the Reata racehorses; monogramming the household linen, the table silver; adorning the ranch business stationery and Leslie's own delicate blue-grey; stamped on the jeeps, the pick-ups, the station wagons and a telephone ringing and a man's voice answering it; Dimode rising from where he had knelt near the pool and calling in Spanish to his men, "Eh medio dia! Noon!"

Leslie Benedict emerged from the house, cool, slim; about her a sort of careless elegance. The Paris buyer at Neiman's in Dallas had said of Leslie Benedict that she wore indistinct clothes with utter distinction.

Instantly it was as though the enchantment under which Reata Ranch had lain now was broken. The Valley of shouts at the Mexican children were freed from the schoolroom; the crunch of gravel under heavy tyres; a telephone ringing and a man's voice answering it; Dimode rising from where he had knelt near the pool and calling in Spanish to his men, "Eh medio dia! Noon!"

Leslie Benedict emerged from the house, cool, slim; about her a sort of careless elegance. The Paris buyer at Neiman's in Dallas had said of Leslie Benedict that she wore indistinct clothes with utter distinction.

The buyer was rather proud of this mot. Sometimes she elaborated on it. "What she wears never hits you in the eye. It sneaks up on you. No tough colors, ever. And no faddy stuff. My opinion Mrs. Jordan Benedict's the best-dressed woman in Texas and doesn't even know it. Or care."

Now, at sight of her guest, Leslie's rather set smile of greeting became one of warmth and affection. "Vash! What a nice surprise!"

"Thought you'd all gone off and died."

"Where's Pinky?"

"In the car there. We're so hot we're spittin' cotton."

The contrast between the two voices was startling—the one low, vibrant; the other high, strident.

"I thought it was the others from the Big House. Come in, come in! Something cold to drink?"

"Hot coffee I'd druther if it's handy."

"Of course. After twenty years and more in Texas wouldn't you think I'd know it's always hot coffee?" She called in Spanish to someone unseen within the house. She went to the verandah entrance. "Pinky! Come in!"

"Where at's Bick?"

"He'll be here any minute. Come in out of the sun."

Vashni, sunk in the depths of a cool chartreuse chair, fanned her flushed face with an unavailing handkerchief. Her inward eye on her own expanse of beige silk, her outward eye on Leslie's slim grey-

jump next, shouldn't wonder, middle of August middle of the range, bringing snow by airlift from Alaska."

Past the old white-washed adobe schoolhouse, the Big House with its Spanish towers and intricate grillwork, past the old carriage-house and the vast garage. But no cars stood waiting there, only the vine leaves stirred in the hot wind as the visitors drew up before the Main House and peered toward the shaded enclosure.

Vashni essayed a "Yoo-hoo!" It emerged a croak from her parched throat. "Either they're gone or they're all dead. Can't be gone, this hour."

With amazing agility she climbed out of the car, smoothing her crumpled skirts as she went toward the porch, her feet and ankles slim and small and neat beneath the ponderous superstructure.

"Leslie! Bick! Where've you all got to, anyway?"

On her way to greet Mott Snyth, Leslie Benedict's hand rested a moment on the shoulder of her guest's moist and crumpled bulk. "Dear Vashni, that's the nicest thing any woman ever said to another woman . . . Coffee, Pinky?" she called to him.

The little man, a Watteau figure in Western masquerade, emerged from the big car. Legs slightly bowed like those of a cowboy in a Grade B movie; the unvenerable white head was a dot beneath the great brimmed hat.

"Me and Vashni got to mosey along, all that way to drive." This was a cunning opening wedge. "Where's Bick?"

"Out since five this morning. You know Bick. He's probably down at the hangar now. He's always fussy about the big plane, I don't know why. You can fall just as far from a little one as a big one, but he's always casual about the little ones."

"Mott's the same way." Vashni had taken off one tiny beige slipper and was wriggling her toes ecstatically. "Climb into the little Piper Cub, kind of flaps his foot, and shoves off like he was in a kiddiecar. Years back, when we first got a flock of planes and Mott used to fly the kids to school mornings—M-m-m, coffee!"

Delfina, soft-stepping, concealing her shyness with a childish insolence of bearing. As she placed the coffee tray on the glass-topped table she stared at the two women with the steady, disconcerting gaze of a four-year-old, the bright, dark eyes making leisurely appraisal from foot to throat, encompassing their clothes. Their faces did not interest her.

Masses of vital black hair hung about her shoulders, her blouse was low-cut, her stockingless feet shuffled in heuraches.

"Thank you, Delfina," Mrs. Benedict said—a shade too nicely—in English. Her eyes met Vashni's as the girl disappeared.

"New?" inquired Vashni over the scalding rim of her coffee cup.

"Alvaro's granddaughter. I can't do a thing about her hair! She copies the girls in

the movies and the dime store in town. She's been working as elevator operator at the Hake. You must have seen her. Her cousin is a bellboy there. Raul Salazar. Alvaro asked Jordan to bring her back here to work in the house, she'd got into trouble—"

"Look, Les, does this look too fussy? Travelling, I mean. Light beige?"

"Well . . . beige is—good in Texas. The dust." The soft dark eyes kind, friendly.

"I don't know," Vashni panted unhappily. She narrowed her baby-blue eyes to contemplate the entire effect of Leslie's costume. "Now, take you, piece by piece—shoes and stockings and dress and everything, why they're just right. But to look at you quick you don't look like anything."

At the startled look and then the quick flashing smile of the other woman Vashni's customary high color took on the scarlet of embarrassment.

"Oh, Leslie, I didn't mean it mean! I just meant no matter what you've got on, it doesn't hit you in the eye the first thing, but take you apart, why, everything is perfect. Just perfect."

On her way to greet Mott Snyth, Leslie Benedict's hand rested a moment on the shoulder of her guest's moist and crumpled bulk. "Dear Vashni, that's the nicest thing any woman ever said to another woman . . . Coffee, Pinky?" she called to him.

Quite as though she cared about the weather, about flying, about anything that had to do with this hideous day, Leslie Benedict took her cue as hostess, she said smoothly. "Do you think so? What do you think, Pinky? Some of those fat black clouds look like rain."

"Rain!" Pinky scoffed. "Can easy tell you've only been twenty years in Texas. No rain in those clouds. They're just empties coming back from California. Come on now, Vashni. We got to get going."

"How does it happen you're not flying?"

Hastily Pinky raised a protesting hand. "We better not go into that. Well, I didn't want to haul out the big plane, Vashni wouldn't hear to the little one."

The rosy face crinkled in a grin. "They used to be a saying, in Texas a man is no better than his horse, and a man on foot is no man at all. Nowdays a fella without an aeroplane has got no rating, might as well be a Mexican."

At last. "Don't you want to leave the car here and fly down with us?"

"Oh, Leslie!" Vashni's tone of astonishment would not have deceived an amoeba.

"Well, say, if you're sure it wouldn't crowd you none—"

Quickly Vashni cinched it. "Love it! Just purely love it, and thank you kindly. Who all's going?"

As Leslie Benedict answered there was a half-smile on her lips, a rueful little smile. She thought, This is ludicrous, I suppose. Twenty-five years ago I'd have said it was too fantastic to be true. When I introduce Pinky and Vashni, these good and kind people, there are no terms in which I can define them. They are of a world unknown outside Texas.

Even as she answered Vashni she was seeing these two with the eye of one who would always be an outsider in this land.

Pinky. As unlike the cowboy of the motion picture and the Western novel as one could be in the likeness of a man. Small, his-bone structure as delicate as a woman's. His

in their high-heeled ornately tooled cowboy boots were arched and slim as a girl's. Pink cheeks, pensive eyes, white hair that waved in thick clusters of softness.

In the dust-clouded past he had come to Texas from nowhere. They had devilled him and ridiculed him with their rough jokes and rougher horseplay. He must compensate for his miniature frame and his innocent blue eyes and pink cheeks. So he had been bolder, more daring than the biggest and most daredevil cow and in the brush country, his small hands were steel and there was no horse he could not gentle.

He had come to the Hake ranch—the vast Double D—possessed of nothing but the saddle he carried under his arm—his riding' riggin', in the much idiom. And Vash'ti Hake finally had married him on the rebound—this big booming woman who had been a big awkward girl—this daughter of old Cliff Hake, now long dead. Two million acres of ranch land, oil wells, cattle, millions.

"Who all's going, Les? You're over at the Big House, 'n?"

Leslie walked to the verandah screen door, she listened a moment. "The cars went out to call for them."

"Yeh, but who, Les?"

"Well—uh—there's Cal Otter the cowboy movie star, you know—with the white hat and white buckskin chaps and white horse and all those white teeth. And the King and Queen of Sargovia and Joe Gouch the ex-heavyweight champion and Lona Lane that movie girl and her husband and my sister Lady Kar-

"She here! When'd she come?" Vash'ti interrupted.

"Leigh flew over from London on Tuesday and flew on the next day. And Jordan's mother Bowie and his sister from Buffalo."

"Uh-uh! Trouble. And who?"

"Well—the Moreys are here from Dallas," Leslie told her, and Congressman Hale, and Gabe Target stopped on his way down and Judge Whiteside and a South American ex-President—I've forgotten which country—and Mrs Tarova and some others and Cal Otter's taking his white horse." The absurd list gave her a mischievous pleasure.

"On the plane?" Vash'ti asked.

"It's all right. In the forward compartment. He's used to flying. We'll be up only an hour or two; Jordan wants to see the king and queen marching of the ranch from the air, they're thinking of buying a few thousand acres north in the Panhandle, they spent a day or two at King Ranch. Jordan says we've bought some of Bob Kleen's prize Brahma bulls."

"That's a funny thing for him to do; go to ranching," Vash'ti commented. "A real king and queen like that."

Vash'ti ruminated a moment. "I don't know. I ever met a king and queen. Course, we're out of business now, we two, you might say. But what do you call them, talking them I mean?"

But before Pinky could benefit by an elementary lesson in the etiquette of royalty, a battered jeep crunched to a jolting stop in the driveway as though it had been lassoed, and a gaunt girl in boots, jeans, and a fifty-dollar shirt swung long legs around the side.

"Hi!" she said.

She was hatless, her sun-bleached hair was tied back into a sort of horse's tail. She entered the verandah, she went through a routine that was the perfection of pretty manners. So-and-so Mrs. Snyth . . . this and that. Pinky . . . see you at the party, Mother, it sounds horrible, doesn't it . . . where's Dad . . . I'm off . . .

"Luz, they'll all be here in a minute," Leslie told her. "Why don't you go with us in the big plane?"

"Oh, Ma! That hearse."

"Amador's packing the lunch. We're eating on the plane. Don't you want something before you go?"

"How you going?" Pinky asked, though he knew well enough.

"I'm flying the little Snazzy. I'll stop on my way to the field and grab a hamburger at Jerky's place."

Pinky wagged his head knowingly. "You taking any passengers in that footbath?"

"Don't be roguish, Pinky."

"He ain't going to the rumput!"

"He wouldn't be seen dead at it."

"He sure would if he went," Pinky asserted, quite solemnly. She was off with a neat little clatter of scuffed boots.

Pinky called after her, "I am informed that Jerky's hamburgers are made of horsemeat. Old beat-up quartershot for their hides."

She stuck her head out of the jeep. "Plenty of onions and barbecue sauce it'll be better than tough Texas beef." To the shouts of remonstrance at this heresy the jeep scuttled off like a frightened bug.

The eyes of the three followed her out of sight. Silence hung momentarily between them. Vash'ti was not given to silences.

"Honey, she ain't serious about that dirt farmer, is she?"

But before Leslie could answer Pinky cut in. "Now, Vash'ti, look who's talking. You married a low-down cow hand, didn't you?"

"Cow hand is different. This fella works afoot. Telling everybody, going around lecturing at Grange halls about this grass and that, blue grama—yellow bluestem—side-oats grama—telling Texans been ranching all their life and their fathers and grandfathers how to run things. He don't even act like a Texan. Cornell College! Texas U ain't good enough."

"What you think of Bob Dietz, Leslie?" Pinky asked baldly. "Me, I got the opinion that boy is an unexception."

Very quietly Leslie Benedict said, "I think Bob Dietz may change the whole face of Texas—its system and its politics and its future."

Vash'ti Snyth gave a little yelp of shock. "Why, Leslie Benedict, he ain't got five hundred dollars cash to his name!"

"I'd have said a hundred," Leslie replied quietly.

Now there came an acceleration of sound and movement from within the house

and without. It was like the quickening of the tempo in a discordant modern symphony. From the dim interior of one of the rooms along the verandah emerged young Jordy Benedict with the Mexican girl who was his wife.

They were hand in hand, like children afraid. There was between them a resemblance so marked that they might have been brother and sister. His hair was black but hers was blacker. He had inherited his from Leslie, his mother; she from centuries of Spanish forebears. Her skin was camellia-white, the Texas sun had hurled its red rays in vain. So young, so beautiful, they bore themselves with a shy uncertainty.

Nothing about them of the confidence with which Luz had come and gone. The girl was dressed in black, very simple in cut, a strand of small pearls at her throat, and that throat and the face above it seemed almost translucent, as though a light were glowing behind them.

They knew their manners. Hers were quaintly Old World in their formality. She had been born in Texas, as he had been. Her father and mother, her grandfather and grandmother, her great-grandfather and great-grandmother and their forebears had been native to this land centuries before the word Texas had ever been heard.

In a vortex of aeroplanes and bourbon and Brahman cattle and little white mink capes and luxury cars and oil rigs and skyscrapers, this girl moved and spoke in the manner of an ancient people in an ancient land.

"Hiyah, honey!" yelled Vash'ti as though addressing a deaf foreigner. "My, you sure look pretty."

To this the girl said nothing. With grave dignity she gave her hand to Vash'ti Snyth, to Pinky.

"Sure do," echoed Pinky, and took her hand in his bone-crushing grip. She gave a little yelp, then she laughed like a child at sight of Jordan's startled look. For the moment the tension that had followed their entrance was broken.

"What do you think you're doing?" Jordy Benedict said, laughing, and pretending to shy away from Pinky's extended hand. "Bulldogging a steer?" He spoke with a slight stammer—not always marked when he was at ease, but now noticeable as he negotiated the word bulldogging.

"Hiyah, Jordan!" Pinky pronounced it "Jurdan," Texas fashion. "You and Juanita flying down to the big blow?"

"No," Jordy said and turned away. He sat then on the arm of his wife's chair and flung one arm across the back. There was something defiant, something protective about the gesture. "We're driving—if we go."

LESLIE put her hand lightly on the girl's knee. "Juanita doesn't like flying." She added quickly, "Neither do I, really. I guess I belong to the generation that still thinks the automobile is a wonderful invention."

"What you wearing black for all the time, anyway?" Vash'ti shrieked at the girl. "Like a Mex—" She stopped, appalled. "I mean a little bitty thing like you, why'n't you wearing bright stuff, look at me, I got age on me but I go busting out like a rainbow."

Pinky shook his head in a mood of ruminant wonder. "Funny thing about womenfolks like Vash'ti here. Her younguns growed up and married away, she's got to be riding herd on everybody else's."

"Mott Snyth!" The vast

bosom heaved, the plump pink face crinkled like a baby's who is about to cry. "You go to saying things like that, mean, I've a good mind to—"

But at the sound of motor-cars along the drive and the quick drum of horse's hoofs the infantile face cleared magically. As Bick Benedict leaped off his horse a Mexican boy sprang from nowhere to mount the brisk little animal, and, wheeling, clattered off to the stables.

There was nothing regal, certainly, in the outer aspect of this broad-shouldered figure in the everyday clothes of a Texas cowboy. Yet here was the ruler of an empire. His high-heeled boots of black leather were stitched in colored thread, scuffed by hard wear, handmade, had cost perhaps sixty dollars; tight brown canvas pants tucked into the boot tops; brown shirt open at the throat; a canvas brush jacket; a wide-brimmed hat, dust-stained, and rolled at the brim to make an exaggerated tricorn.

Every garment he wore was suited to the work and the climate of his world; and everything from his lariat to his saddle, from his boots to his hat had been copied from the Mexican horsemen whose land this Texas had been little more than a century ago.

Just below the leather belt with its hand-tooled design of the reata the hard lean body was beginning to show a suspicion of a hulge. Sun, wind, and dust had etched Bick Benedict's face, tanned the skin to warm russet.

A strangely contradictory face, benign and arrogant. Benevolent and ruthless. His was a deceptive gentleness, soft-spoken, almost mild. The eyes were completely baffling: guileless, visionary, calculating, shrewd.

Up since five he was late, he was weary, he was beaten, he had nicked his right forefinger

in a magic new weighing machine they were installing down at the main corral. He threw a lot of Texas into his greeting now.

"Vash'ti! And Pinky! Well! This is mighty nice!" He clasped Pinky's little hand of steel, he took Vash'ti's plump fingers in his hand that was as tough as rawhide.

Vash'ti's color, normally pink, now became enriched by a maroon overlay. She had blushed in this way, painfully, at sight or touch of him ever since the day, over twenty years ago, when he had surprised Nueces County and the whole of Texas by bringing this Leslie, this Virginia girl unknown to them all, to Reata Ranch as his wife.

Jilted they said. At least the same as jilted Vash'ti Hake. Even his sister Luz had as much as admitted they'd be married someday and you know how she glared if any woman so much as looked at him.

"Nearly winded Pronto getting here. Anything wrong, Leslie?"

He poured a cup of coffee, drank it black and hot with the eagerness of need. People frequently were annoyed by the fact that as they talked to him he appeared not to be listening. He listened to nothing that did not vitally interest him; and nothing held his interest that was not vitally connected with this vast this fantastic kingdom over which he and his father and his grandfather had reigned for a hundred years.

He was the detachment, the aloofness, the politely absent-minded isolation of royalty.

"They're late, too," Leslie now said. "The cars went to the Big House half an hour ago."

He tensed to a distant sound. "There they are now. I'll change and be back before they're out of the cars."

"Pinky and Vash'ti are going with us. I thought we could drive down now, and all those people needn't get out of the cars."

Over his shoulder as he strode indoors, "Better not do that. But I'll only be five minutes. Shave on the plane." He vanished into the shaded recesses of the house.

A covey of long, sleek grey cars; talk, over-hearty laughter. Two people only occupied the passenger space of the roomy first car though each following car held six or seven.

Leslie stood up. It was not merely the act of rising to her feet; there was about the simple act something that communicated itself to Vash'ti, relaxed and bountifully disposed in the depths of her chair, and to Pinky squatting on his haunches as he tousled and played with the frisking dog, and to the two young people so silent and politely aloof.

A tall, thin man in a black Homburg scrambled hastily down from the front seat which he had occupied with the Mexican driver and opened the door of the lead car. The urban incongruity of the black Homburg in that scene and climate gave the wearer the comic aspect of a masquerader. The King and Queen of Sargovia stepped out of the car.

A thin, somewhat horse-

Two versions of the Bible:

"VANITY OF VANITIES . . ."

• This week's choice for comparison between the King James Bible and the recently published Revised Standard Version is one of the most beautiful passages in the Old Testament—Ecclesiastes 1: 1-9.

King James version

The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem.

2 Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity.

3 What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?

4 One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever.

5 The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose.

6 The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits.

7 All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again.

8 All things are full of labour, man cannot utter it: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing.

9 The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun.

Revised standard version

The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem.

(2) Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity.

(3) What does man gain by all the toil at which he toils under the sun?

(4) A generation goes, and a generation comes, but the earth remains for ever.

(5) The sun rises and the sun goes down, and hastens to the place where it rises.

(6) The wind blows to the south, and goes round to the north; round and round goes the wind, and on its circuits the wind returns.

(7) All streams run to the sea, but the sea is not full; to the place where the streams flow, there they flow again.

(8) All things are full of weariness; a man cannot utter it; the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing.

(9) What has been is what will be; and what has been done is what will be done; and there is nothing new under the sun.

GIANT: BY EDNA FERBER

faced, sad girl in a not very double string of large, genuine pearls which dangled drearily and looked dated because all the women were wearing two-strand chokers of cultured pearls that looked smarter and more genuine. The man was shorter than she, with a long neck as though he had stretched it in an attempt to appear taller; and his Habsburg blood showed in his prognathous jaw, which should have looked strong but didn't.

He wore one of those suits carefully made by a Central European tailor who long ago had served an apprenticeship in London's Jermyn Street. But he had apparently lost the knack of line, for the suit was tight where it should have been easy.

Leslie went forward to meet them as Vashni scrambled for the slipper at the side of her chair. "I hope you slept, Sir. And you, Ma'am. Everyone was warned to be very quiet on pain of death, but, you know—ranch noises are so—Sir, may I present Mrs. Mott Smyth. Mr. Mott Smyth. Ma'am, may I present—"

"It isn't far," Bick Benedict assured them. "Four hundred miles. We're early. We can cruise around. I'd like to show you something of the Humedo Division of Reata from the air, of course. And you could have a look at historic old Beaumont later. That's the site of old Spindle Top, you know."

"Spindle Top?" said Miss Lona Lane, the movie girl. "Is that a mountain or something? I don't like flying over mountains."

The Texans present looked very serious, which meant that they were bursting inside with laughter. It was as though a tourist in Paris had asked if Notre Dame was a football team.

"Uh—no," Bick Benedict said, turning on all his charm, which was considerable. Miss Lona Lane was extremely photogenic. "Spindle Top was the first big oil gusher in

Texas. It dates back to nineteen-one."

The Texans relaxed.

"What's this San Antone?" inquired Joe Glotch, the former heavyweight champion turned sports man and New Jersey restaurateur. "I heard that's quite a spot."

"Nothing there but Randolph Field," the congressman assured him.

Bick Benedict addressed himself to the King. "Perhaps tomorrow we can fly up to Dead Smith County in the Panhandle. There are some Herffords up there. I'd like to show you."

"That would be interesting. What is the distance?"

"About eight hundred miles."

The young man smiled nervously, he fingered his neat dark necktie.

"To tell you the truth, I am not as accustomed to this flying as you Texans. You see, my little country could be hidden in one corner of your Texas. At home I rarely flew. It was considered too great a risk. Of course, that was when kings were—Our pilots were always falling into the Aegean Sea. Or somewhere. Perhaps it is because we are not the natural mechanics that you here in the great industrial United States—"

His English was precise and correct, as was his wife's, clearly the triumph of the Oxford tutor and English government system over the mid-European consonant.

"That's right," said Congressman Bale Clinch. "Here every kid's got a car or anyway a motor-bike. Flying comes natural, like walking to these kids."

The group had been whisked to the ranch airfield, where the vast winged ship stood awaiting them. A miniature airport, complete, set down like an extravagant toy in the midst of the endless plain. A flock of small planes, two medium large company planes, and the mammoth private plane of Jordan Benedict.

Down the runway Luz was warming up for her flight, you could see the trembling of the little bright yellow bug, its wings glinting in the sun, gay as a clip in a Fifth Avenue jeweller's window.

They all climbed the metal steps, jauntily, into the hot shade of the plane's interior.

"It'll be cooler as soon as we get up," Bick Benedict called out. "And we're pressurised, of course."

Seats upholstered in brilliant blue and yellow and rose and green, very modern and capacious. It was startling to see that they did not stand in orderly rows like the seats in a commercial plane, but were firmly fixed near the windows as casually as you would place chairs in a living-room.

The safety belts were in bright colors to match, and the metal clasps bore the Reata brand. In the tail was a cosy section with banquets upholstered in crimson leather and a circular table in the centre for cards or for dining.

And there at the door as they entered was a slim, dark-haired young steward in a smart French-blue uniform and beside him stood the blond young stewardess in her slick-sailed version of the same, and in the inner distance an assistant steward busy with wraps and little jewel-cases and magazines.

A vibration, a humming, a buzzing, a roaring; they lifted, they soared and roared aloft in a giant iridescent bubble. The ship was as steady as a bathtub, the stewards were preparing lunch, there was a tantalising scent of coffee.

So, in the almost unbearably brilliant blue sky they soared and roared aloft in a giant iridescent bubble. The ship was as steady as a bathtub, the stewards were preparing lunch, there was a tantalising scent of coffee.

THE canny and taciturn Gabe Target, who was said to hold the mortgage on every skyscraper in Texas and to own at least half of all the oil leases, now turned conversationally to the royal pair. His face was benign and mild, he resembled a good old baby until he lifted the hooded eyelids and you saw the twin cold grey phlegms through which his opalescent soul regarded the world.

His voice was low and somewhat drawing. "Understand you're fixing to buy a ranch, and you and the uh—your good lady here. Could they not have removed this mosquito with hand labor before it grew to such—"

Some of the women visitors from outside Texas screamed. The Texas men grinned. They said, "Now nothing to be scared of, honey. This ship's just feeling frisky as a cutting horse." The Texas-bred women looked unruffled and resigned, like mothers who are accustomed to the antics of high-spirited children.

From her aloof place near the tail of the big room the aquiline Lady Karfrey barked, "Why don't you Texans grow up?"

Bick Benedict's brother Bowie and Bick's sister Maudie Pacer, from Buffalo, turned upon her the gaze which native Texans usually reserve for rattle snakes.

The ship righted itself, Leslie's lovely voice projected itself miraculously above the roar and the chatter. She pointed towards the windows and the plains below. "They're using the stinger on the mosquito. You might like to see it—those of you who aren't Texans."

"It's that yellow speck. Now we're a bit lower, you can see. The black patch is brush. The little thing moving along in the stinger. It's a kind of tank with great knives and arms and head like a steel monster. It's called a tree-duster, too. It's rather fascinating to watch."

The king's voice was high and plaintive, it had the effect of a hoot in a cave. "I know of your charming wife's career, of course, who does not, but tell me what is your work, your profession? Everyone works in this marvellous country of yours. And your name—I did not quite—"

The man, caught off guard, took a too hasty sip from the glass in his hand, coughed, managed to bow apologetically though seated. Recovering, "Lamax!" he roared. "G. Irwin Lamax. Oral specialist."

An expression of absolute incomprehension glazed his listener's face. Noting this, G. Irwin Lamax smiled understandingly.

"Not at all," said the girl with an effort at gaiety. "But to have a good whisky named after one is more flattering."

Fascinated, the two watched the male Texan tossing down straight bourbon. Bent on pleasing though they were, they refused it themselves. On the wagon, said the heavyweight

ex-champion. Not before six p.m., said the cowboy movie star.

For Leslie Benedict there was about this vast and improbable vehicle and its motley company a dreamlike quality. Her sister Lady Karfrey was being studiously rude to royalty, she had no time for the deposed or unsuccessful.

They're behaving like refugees, Leslie thought. Worried and uncertain and insecure and over-anxious to please. Kings and queens deposed once were called exiles—splendid romantic exiles. Now they're only refugees, I suppose.

They alone stared out the plane windows, in their eyes bright and unbelieveably mingled. Seen from the sky, the arid landscape lay, a lovely thing. The plains were gold and purple, the clouds cast great blue-black shadows, there were toy boxes in a dark green patch that marked the oasis of an occasional ranch house, and nearby the jade-green circles that meant waterholes.

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For perhaps thirty seconds then the huge ship did a series of banks, swoops, and dives. It was an utterly idiotic and wantonly frightening performance, Leslie thought. Unadult and cruel.

For the king, the one familiar word which had emerged audibly. "Ah yes, work! Everyone in your country works—that is one of the wonderful things."

Practically the king whatched at the one familiar word which had emerged audibly. "Ah yes, work! Everyone in your country works—that is one of the wonderful things."

In a panic lest Gabe Target should make further inaudible offerings, he turned to encounter the fascinated stare of Lona Lane's husband seated just across the way. His royal training, drilled into him from the age of six, had taught him to file diplomatically in his memory, names, faces, careers.

At a loss now, he regarded the tall, moon-faced man smelling faintly of antiseptic. The eyes were myopically enlarged behind thick octagonal lenses, his maroon necktie matched his socks, his socks matched the faint stripe of his shirt.

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Smiling still more broadly, he tapped his large, even front teeth with a polished fingernail. "Oral specialist. Extractions. Teeth. Dentist."

The king stared, stiffened, remembered, smiled a frosty smile, he was trying hard to say democracy democracy in his mind. He glanced at the lovely Lona Lane, he looked out the window at the seemingly endless reaches of Bick Benedict's empire, he closed his world-weary eyes a moment and wished himself quietly dead.

Bick Benedict, in response to a summoning glance from Leslie, came swiftly up the broad aisle between the seats. "Feeling all right, Sir? Well I just thought—We're flying over the south section now, we always buzz them a little when we go over."

He turned to face the assembled company, he stood an easy handsome figure in his very good tropical suit and his high-heeled polished tan boots; that boyish, rather shy smile. He raised his voice. "Hold your hats, boys and girls! Hang on to your drinks. We're going to give the south section a little buzz. Here we go!"

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country's overrun with insects."

"Really! The whole of the United States!"

Oh, dear! Leslie thought. Now I'm talking that way, too.

"No, I meant only Texas. All this once was open prairie Grazing country. Then the mesquite came in a little. It wasn't bad because there are no trees to speak of, you know. Then they brought cattle in from Mexico, where the mesquite was growing. Some say that the cattle droppings carried the seed. Others say that when they built all these thousands of miles of automobile roads they stopped the prairie fires that used to sweep the earth clean of everything but grass—"

The voice of Maudie Pacer, Bick's perpetually angry sister, broke in with a sneering quality of almost comic dimensions. "Really, Leslie, you're getting to be quite a rancher, aren't you! You must have been reading books again."

But no one heeded this or even heard it, except the three women who knew—Leslie herself, and her good friend Adrienne Morey, and the outspoken, amiable Vashni Smyth.

"But your serfs," said the king. "The peons I see everywhere here. Could they not have removed this mosquito with hand labor before it grew to such—"

"Serfs!" roared Bale Clinch. "Why, we got no serfs here in this country! Everybody here is a free American."

"Yes, of course," agreed the king hastily. "Certainly. I see I see."

He does see, Leslie thought. He's only frightened little king without a kingdom, but he sees.

"Lunch!" cried Vashni happily as the steward and the stewardess and the assistant steward appeared with trays. "M-m! Leslie, you do have the loveliest food! Avocados stuffed with crab meat to begin with! My!"

It was mid-afternoon as they came down at the Hermoso airport, the shabby old municipal airport. As they buckled their seat belts for the landing, they beheld, glittering beside the scrubulous old airport, the splendid white-and-silver palace which Jett Rink had built down on the prairie.

Spanning the roof of the building was a gigantic silver sign that, treated with some magic chemical, shone day and night so that the words JET RINK AIRPORT could be seen from the air and from the ground for miles across the flat plains.

"Oh, look!" cried Adrienne Morey. A trail of heaven blue as a streamer of sky had been tossed like a scarf to the earth spelled out the omnipresent name of Jett Rink.

"It's bluebonnets!" Leslie said, and her voice vibrated with resentment. "He has had bluebonnets planted and clipped and they spell his name. In bluebonnets!"

"How cute!" said Lona Lane. "It's simply fabulous! I'm dying to meet him."

It was the pallid queen who put forward the query this time. "We ask a great many questions, I am afraid. But bluebonnets—what is it that this is?"

"Why, girlie," bawled Bale Clinch—he had had three boyfriends— "girlie, you been neglected in your Texan education down there at the Benedict's. Bluebonnets! Everybody knows they're the national State flower of Texas. The most beautiful flower in the most wonderful



SPECIAL HOLIDAY FICTION

State in the world. That's all bluebonnets is." He pondered a moment. "Are."

The huge craft touched the runway as delicately, as sensitively as a moth on a window-pane. The clank of metal as straps were unbuckled. The Texans strolled to the door as casually as one would proceed from the house to the street. The visitors breathed a sigh of relief. They stood ready to disembark, huddled at the door, king and cowboy and rancher and politician and actress and statesman and shrewd operator and housewife. Royalty in the lead.

At the door, smiling but military in bearing, stood the slim young steward and the pretty stewardess. "Come back quick now!" the girl chirped.

"I beg your pardon!" said the king, startled.

"It's a-a phrase," Leslie explained. "It's the Texas way of saying good-bye."

Just before they descended the aluminum stairway that had been trundled quickly across the field for their landing, Bick Benedict made a little speech, as host.

"Look, I'm going to brief you, kind of. Those of you who aren't Texans. This is the old airport, you know. The new one isn't open for traffic until after to-night. That's where the party's to be. I'm afraid there'll be photographers and so forth waiting out there and reporters."

"You don't think Jett Rink's going to lose a chance like this for publicity, do you, Bick?" Lucia Morey called out, and a little laugh went up among the Texans.

"This is going to be a stampede," Gabe Target predicted.

"No, now, Gabe. Everything'll be fine if you just trust me. There's a flock of cars waiting. We'll pile right in and head for the hotel. And, remember, everything's pilone. No one touches a pocket—except to pull a gun, of course."

Even the outsiders knew this was a standard laugh. But "Pilone?" inquired Joe Glotch.

"Means everything free," yelled Congressman Bale Clinch, "from Jett Rink's hotel and back again."

"Yes," drawled Pinky Snyth. "And I'll give anybody odds that Gabe Target here will own the hotel and the airport and the whole outfit away from Jett Rink inside of three years."

There were the photographers kneeling for close shots, standing on trucks for far shots. There were planes and planes and planes overhead and underfoot. A Texas big-town commercial airfield. Squalling kids, cattlemen in big hats and high-heeled boots—the old-timers. The modern young business and professional men, in leathers, their faces set and serious behind bone-rimmed spectacles, their briefcases under their arms as they descended the planes from Dallas and Lubbock and Austin and El Paso.

Local airlines with cosmic names tacked to and fro between cotton towns and oil towns, wheat towns and vegetable valleys. Hatless housewives in jeans or ginghams with

an infant on one arm and a child by the hand flew a few hundred miles to do a bit of shopping and see the home folks. The Wonder Bird, the dazzling invention of the twentieth century, had become a common carrier, as unremarkable here in Texas as the bus line of another day.

"This way!" Bick Benedict called. "Just follow me through this gate; it's supposed to be closed, but I know the . . . right through here . . . those are our cars lined up out there."

There were signs printed in large black letters on the walls. One sign read DAMAS. Another, CABALLEROS.

"What's that?" inquired Loma Lane, scurrying by. "What's that sign mean?"

"Sh-sh!" Vashti Snyth hissed. "That's Spanish. Means 'toilets for the Mexicans. Men and women, it means."

Through the motor entrance another sign read RECLAME SU EQUIPAJE AFUERA A SU DERECHA. Miss Lane glanced at this, decided against inquiring.

"H'm," said the ex-Presidente. "I find this interesting, these signs in Spanish. It is like another country, a foreign country in the midst of the United States."

"Texas!" protested old Judge Whitemore, puffing a long "Why, sir, Texas is the most American country in the whole United States."

"I should have thought New England, or perhaps the Middle West, Kansas or even Illinois."

"East!" scoffed Judge Whitemore. "The East stinks."

Through the withering blast of the white-hot sun again and then into the inferno of the waiting motor-cars that had been standing so long in the glare. The newspaper men and women crowded around the windows. They said, "Lean forward a little will you, King," as they tried for another picture.

Bick Benedict's eyes blazed blue-black. "Look here, you felas!" But Leslie put a hand on his arm. She was the diplomatic buffer between Bick and his rages against the intruding world.

"We'll see you all later," she called in that soft, clear voice of hers. "To-night." She pressed her husband's arm.

"See you later, boys," Bick muttered grumpily, not looking at them. He climbed into the huge car in which the king and queen were seated in solitary grandeur except for the driver and their aide in front.

"You all going to be at the Conky?" one of the reporters yelled after them as they moved off.

Leslie, with the others about to step into one of the line of waiting cars, smiled over her shoulder at the cluster of reporters and cameramen. "Conky," she repeated after them with distaste.

She caught a glimpse of the royal pair, an artificial smile still pasted, slightly askew, on their faces. Then their car picked up speed and was away like the lead car in a funeral cortege. The grimace of forced

amiability faded from their weary features. With a gesture Leslie seemed to wipe the smile from her own countenance; she thought, I'm one of a family of rulers, too, by marriage. The Benedictis of Texas. I wonder how soon we're going to be disposed.

Somewhat the first formality of the earlier hours was gone. Helter-skelter had they piled into the capacious cars, and now there mingled affably in one big interior the prizefighter and Vashti and Pinky, Leslie, the South American, and the congressman.

"Do you object?" inquired the ex-Presidente as the cortège drove off. "that I ask so many questions? After all, I am here to learn. We are Good Neighbors, are we not?"

"Oh, please!" Leslie said quickly. "Please do."

"Uh—Conqui? However it is spelled. Is that the name of a man like this Jettrink?"

"That's two names, you know. His first name is Jett. His last name is Rink. Conky. Well, they just call it that, it's a sort of nickname for the big new hotel. The Conquistador. Jett Rink built that, too."

"M-m! The Spanish is very popular here, I can see. And this Jett Rink, whose name I hear so often. He is a great figure in the United States of America?"

"Say, that's a good one," said Mott Snyth. Then, at a nudge from his wife, "Pardon me."

A little cloud of ominous quiet settled down upon the occupants of the car.

Through this Leslie Benedict spoke coolly. "This Jett Rink about whom you hear so much—he's a spectacular figure here in Texas."

"They say he was weaned on loco weed when he was a baby," Vashti babbled. "He's always trying to do something bigger or costs more money than anybody else. They say this Hermoso airport's bigger than any in the whole United States. La Guardia, even. And this hotel we're going to, why, ever since he saw the Shamrock in Houston he said he was going to put up a hotel bigger and fancier and costing more than even it did. And that's the way he always does."

Congressman Bale Clinch spoke cautiously. "You'd be put to it, trying to explain Jett Rink outside of Texas."

Whirling along the broad roads, past the huddled clusters of barbecue shacks and sunbaked little dwellings like boxes strewn on the prairie. Oceans of green weed wild by the roadside, the green leaves and pink blossoms uniformly grey with dust.

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aiming to tell about that little trouble with the veteran, are you? I wouldn't if I was you. It's liable to give a wrong notion of Texas.

"No. No this is nothing serious. This is about that fellow up to Dalhart." He addressed himself to the ambassador and to Joe Glotch impartially. "That's way up in Dallam County in the Panhandle. This fella, name of Mody—yes, Mody, that was it—he had a little barbecue shack by the road up on Route Eighty-seven. He got a knock of fixing barbecue ribs. They say it had a different taste from anybody else's and nobody's wangled the receipt off of him; he won't give.

"So Jett Rink, he hears about these ribs, and one night when he's good and drunk he gets in his plane with a couple of other umbries; he always travels with a brace of bodyguards. They fly up to Dalhart. It's as good as a thousand miles or nearly, and the place is closed, the fella's gone to bed. Jett and the others they rout him out, they make him fix them a mess of barbecue ribs, and they eat it, and Jett says it's larrupin' and what has he got in the barbecue sauce that makes it taste different. This Mody says it's his receipt, it's his own original mix, and he don't give it out to nobody."

With another impartial glance at his listeners went on:

"Well, Jett gets hot the way he does. He started out just rawhiding, but now he gets wild the way he does when he's bypassed. He hits the fella over the head with a beer bottle, the fella dies, Jett has to pay his widow ten fifteen thousand dollars besides all the other expenses and lawyers and fixers and the plane trip and all. Why, it must of cost Jett Rink better than twenty-five thousand dollars to eat that plate of barbecue. It'd been cheaper for Jett to buy that fella and his barbecue shack and all that part of town, including the grain elevator."

"Funny thing about Jett. If he can get a thing he don't want it. But if he wants it and can't get it, watch out."

"That's right," ruminated Congressman Bale Clinch. "Yes, sir. You got to say this for Jett Rink. He goes after what he wants."

A heavy silence fell upon the occupants of the great rich car as it swept along the sun-drenched streets of Hermoso's outskirts.

Leslie Benedict had been sitting with her eyes shut. Vashti Snyth reached over and patted her hand almost protectively, as a mother might touch a child. She ignored the presence of the others.

"Mott got one fault, it's talking. Talk-talk-talk. What he missed out in growing he makes up in gab."

Congressman Bale Clinch smiled chidingly upon her. "Now, now, Vashti. You hadn't ought to talk about your lord and master thataway." He

then roared as at an exquisitely original witicism.

"We will soon be there," Leslie said to the ambassador. "The Conquistador isn't in the heart of the city, you know. Like the other hotels. It's almost like a big resort hotel."

"Air conditioned," shrilled Vashti, "from cellar to roof, every inch of it—except the help's quarters, a course. They say there's guests there never had their faces outdoors since Jett flung it open—or sealed it shut, you might put it."

"And the recipe for the barbecue," the ambassador persisted gently. "Did he get it then?"

Pinky looked doubtful. "Well, sir, I never rightly heard. The place was closed down or sold out. Jett he felt terrible about the whole thing when he sobered up. There was a daughter, girl about eighteen, she got a job in Jett's outfit somewhere. In the office in Hermoso or Houston or somewhere. Did real well."

"She sure did!" said Vashti with more bite than her speech usually carried.

Silence again. The streets were broad boulevards now, the houses were larger, they became pretentious. Hermoso oil and cattle society had gone in for axles, the motor-cars flashed past masses of brilliant salmon-pink and white and orchid, and now you could see the towers of the Conqueror, the Conquistador rising so incongruously there in suburban Hermoso, thirty stories up from the flat Texas plain.

Towers, balconies, penthouses, palm trees, swimming-pool. Flags and pennants swirled and flirted in the hot Gulf breeze—the single-starred flag of the Lone Star State, the Stars and Stripes above this, but grudgingly; and fluttering from every corner and entrance and tower the personal flag of Jett Rink, the emblem of his success and his arrogance and his power, with his ranch brand centred gold on royal-blue as he had sketched it years ago in his own hand—years and years before he had owned so much as a maverick cow or a gallon of oil: the J and the R combined to make the brand JR.

Houses had been razed, families dispossessed, businesses uprooted, streets demolished to make way for this giant edifice. All about it, clustered near but not too near—like poor relations and servitors around a reigning despot, were the little structures that served the giant one.

Royal-blue and gold smote the eye, the air swam with it. The doorman's uniform, the porter, the swarm of bellboys that sprang up like locusts. Royal-blue carpet in the vast lobby. Gold pillars. Masses of hothouse blue hydrangeas and yellow lilies.

The distinguished guests were engulfed in a maelstrom of boots, spurs, ten-gallon hats, six-foot men; high, shrill voices of women, soft, drawing voices of sunburned men; deep-cushioned couches and chairs hidden under their burden of lolling figures staring slack-jawed at the milling throng, their acting free wide-flung on the thick-piled carpet. The Conquistador was a city in itself, self-

contained, self-complacent, almost majestically vulgar.

Downstairs and upstairs, inside and out, on awnings, carpets, couches, chairs, desks, rugs; towels, linen; metal, cloth, wood, china, glass, the brand JR. was stamped, etched, embroidered, embossed, woven, painted, inlaid.

Later, over a soothing bourbon consumed in the privacy of the Synth suite, together with ten or twelve neighboring guests who had drifted in from this floor or that, Pinky incautiously observed, "Jett's sure got his brand on everything. Prolly got his initials cut in the palm trees out there."

What with Bick Benedict's familiarity with fiestas such as this and Leslie Benedict's clear, orderly sense of situation, the members of their group had, for the most part, been safely disposed in their Conquistador quarters, each according to his importance as seen through the eyes of the manager, the assistant manager, and the room clerk, guided perhaps for this very special occasion by the bloodshot orb of Jett Rink himself.

Protean couches could magically transform single sitting-rooms into bedrooms. Good enough for an ex-Presidente, the hard-pressed management instantly decided. Sitting-room and bedroom in a nice spot for the heavyweight ex-champion. Nice little suite for Cal Otter, the Cowboy Movie Star, where the crowd could get at him for autographs and so on. Snappy little balcony job for Loma Lane, where the photographers could catch her for outside shots if the swimming-pool section got too rough. Never could tell with a gang like this, liquored up and out with the bride off.

The Coronado penthouse suite for the Bick Benedictis, and the Hernando de Soto apartment for the king and queen. Ex or not, the management said in solemn discussion, they were a bona fide king and queen and it would look good in publicity.

This festive opening of Hermoso's airport, gift of the fabulous Jett Rink, had turned Jett Rink's hotel (mortgaged or not, as gossip said, for something like thirty millions) into a vast and horrendous house party. There wasn't a room or a closet or a cupboard to be had by an outsider.

The contrast between the blazing white-hot atmosphere of Hermoso's streets and the air-conditioned chill of every Conquistador room, restaurant, and hall was breath-taking, like encountering a glacier in the tropics.

From every corridor, hurtling out through every room whether open-doored or closed, you heard the shrieks of shrill laugh'er, booming guffaws, the tinkle of glass, a bubble of voices; and through and above it all the unceasing chatter of radios, the twang and throb of cheap music, the rumble of rolling tables laden with food or drink trundled along the halls by stiffly starched blue-and-gold waiters or tightly tailored blue-and-gold bellboys bearing themselves like militia, discreet as secret-service men:



GIANT: BY EDNA FERBER

wise, tough, avaricious, baby-faced.

Tee-hee, ho-ho, yak-yak, Wham. Whoop-e!

"I wish we had friends as amusing as that," Leslie Benedict said to her husband across the vast spaces of the Coronado suite.

"No, you don't," said Bick Benedict. "And don't be like that."

"Like what?" Leslie said. She was standing at the window, which was tightly closed because of the air conditioning, and looking out at the view which consisted of nothing—unless one found refreshing an endless expanse of flat prairie pushing the horizon into obscurity.

"Like the kind of person you aren't. Like dear Lady Kaffrey, your bitter sister. Bitterness doesn't become you."

"What's the opposite of Leibnizbraun, Bick? That's what's the matter with them. They've got too much space. It gives them delusions of grandeur. In the planes they kept on yelling about it being the most wonderful place in the world—the most wonderful people in the world, the biggest cattle, fruit, flowers, vegetables, climate, horses. It isn't. They aren't. And what's so important about bigness, anyway? Bigness doesn't make a thing better."

"All right. I'll bite. What is?" He was at the telephone. "Room clerk. . . . Well, I'll hold on. . . . Don't say the Riviera. Or California."

"No, no, I think the temperature climate of the United States, New York, or Pennsylvania, or Virginia, or even Ohio. Cold in the winter with lemon-yellow sunshine and enough snow to make you long for spring. Hot in summer, cool in the spring, tangy in the autumn. You know where you are and you don't have to explain about it all the time and try to sell it as they do here in Texas."

"Hello! Room clerk? . . . This is Bick Benedict. . . . Oh, fine, fine! . . . No, I don't want to speak to the manager, I just want to know if—Oh, hello there, Liggett! . . . Yes, everything's wonderful . . . yes, she's here looking at the view . . . yes, she thinks the furnishings are wonderful—Look, I called the room clerk to find out if my daughter Luz—uh—Miss Luz Benedict, you know—had come in yet, I—Oh, for

He's putting me back on the room clerk. . . . Hello! Look, can you tell me if Miss Luz Benedict?"

They were in the enormous bedroom. Blond wood, bleached like a Broadway chorus girl.

Their feet seemed to flounder ankle deep in chenille.

"They ought to give you snowshoes for these carpets," Bick said. "Or skin. Liable to get in up to your neck and never get out."

A half acre of dressing-table laden with perfumes, china, glass. A dining-room of bleached mahogany, but vaguely Oriental in defiance of Coronado. The dining room could seat thirty. There was a metal kitchen complete and as virgin as the culinary unit in a utilities-company window. Vast consoles in the entrance hall and living-room. Overpowering lamps with tent-size shades. Three bedrooms. Terraces. A bathroom in pink tile, a bathroom in yellow tile, a bathroom in aquamarine, and here defiance was done to Coronado in terms of brilliant varnished wallpaper depicting conquistadors in armor dallying with maidens of obscure origin among flora not now indigenous to Texas.

Leslie had taken off the blue shantung and was making a tour of the vast and absurd living-room, so cold in its metal and satin and brocade and glass and pale wood and air-conditioning. She surveyed this splendor with an accustomed eye. It had been theirs on the occasion of the hotel's opening a year earlier.

With one hand Leslie hugged her peignoir more tightly about her for warmth while with the other hand she patted cold cream on her face, walking slowly the length of the room and pausing now and then before some monstrous structure of porcelain or carved wood or painting.

"There's no JR on the Meissen or the pictures," she called back to Bick. "What must Coronado think! Except for a few liquor spots on the carpet and cigarette burns on the wood, everything has stood up wonderfully. I hope Hernando de Soto has done as well for the king and queen."

"You were all right on the plane. You promised me you would be and you were." He stood in the great doorway in shirt and shorts and bedroom slippers, a costume becoming only to males of twenty and those in the men's-underwear advertisements.

"I know you didn't want to come, but we had to and you know why. Even if millions are drawn to you. I don't bother you with business affairs, but you had to know that and now I'm telling you again."

And where's Luz I'd like to know! And Jordy and Juana. Why couldn't they come with us the way other people's kids would? No, Luz had to fly her

own, and Jordy and Juana had to drive. And now where are they! And you stand there and talk about the climate of Pennsylvania and Meissen and Coronado. And spots on the carpet."

She went to him. She had to stand on tiptoe, tall though she was. "If you don't mind the cold cream I can stand the shaving soap." She kissed him not at all gingerly. "No soap there, at least."

"You hate the whole thing, don't you? As much as ever. That's why you talk like a—like a—

"Like one of those women in the novels you don't read. Very quippy. Don't worry about the children. They'll make the dinner. Their behaviour is odd but their manners are beautiful."

"Like their mother, wouldn't you say?"

"That's right, amigo. We'd better dress. Entacucharse eh?"

"Now listen, Leslie. It's bad enough having Luz talking pachucos. Where do you hear it? The boys on our place don't talk like that."

"Oh, yes, they do. The young ones. The kids in the garage. And on the street corners in Benedict. Just to-day in the kitchen that young Domingo Quiroz, Ezequiel's grandson, was looking at a leaky pipe that needed welding. He said, 'La paipa esta likando hay que hueldeleara.' That's the sort of Spanish the kids are speaking."

"Entacucharse, eh? Dress to kill. Well, I haven't a zoot suit, have I?"

"I had Eusebio pack your white tuxedo, and I've even ordered a deep red carnation for your buttonhole—probably he only red carnation in Texas. You'll be smart as paint."

He glanced down at himself. He contracted his stomach muscles sharply. "Riding does it. Everybody else lolling around in cars all the time. Even the vaqueros riding herd in jeeps half the time."

"Just remember to tuck in like that when you get into the tax or you'll never make the first button. Look. We'll have to dress."

Here in Southern Texas as in the tropics there was little lingering twilight. It was glancing daylight, it was dark.

"Where're those kids?"

"Luz is probably out at the airfield chumming with the mechanics. Perhaps Jordy and Juana decided not to come. And even if they did, you know they're driving. That takes

"Thanks. I know how long it takes. I'm kind of from Texas too, remember?" He was like that now. On the defensive, moody.

"Yes, dear. Get into your clothes and then we'd better give our Noah's Ark a roll call. Shall we go as we came out—you with the king and queen and I—Doesn't it sound silly?"

Hermoso's old airport, so soon to be discarded, seemed a dim and dated thing huddling shabbily, wistfully outside the glow and sparkle of the Jet Rink palace. Planes were coming and going on the old strip. Against the solid fences that separated the two fields were massed thousands of townspeople, staring, staring, their white faces almost luminous in the reflected light.

They talked and milled and shoved and drank cola and the small children chased one another round and about their elders' legs, and the men shifted

the sleeping babies hanging limp on their shoulders.

And in the deeper shadows stood the Hermosoans of Mexican heritage, their darker faces almost indistinguishable in the gloom. These were quiet, the children did not run about with squawking caps; the boys and girls of sixteen, seventeen, sometimes stood with their arms about each other's waists, but demurely, almost primly, with their parents' eyes approvingly upon them.

The roads beyond were choked with every kind of motor car, and in these, too, the people stood up and stared and wondered and applauded in their curious psychological consciousness, which was a mixture of childlike hope and provincial self-satisfaction.

"They leave that piece. I got up in Tom Green County and it don't come in a duster. I can be in there next year along with any of 'em, Jett Rink or any of 'em. All you need is one good break. What was he but a ranch hand, and not even a riding hand. Afoot. And now lookit!"

Lookit indeed. The guests came in cars the size of hearses and these were not stuck in the common traffic. Each carried a magic card, and whole streets and outlying roads were open only to them. The women had got their dresses in New York or at Neiman-Marcus' in Dallas or Opper Schlink's in Houston. Given three plumes they could have been presented just as they stood at the Court of St. James'.

THEIR jewels were the blazing plaques and chains you see in a Fifth Avenue window outside of which a special policeman with a budge on his hip is stationed on eight-hour duty. Slim, even chic, there still was lacking in these women an almost indefinable quality that was inherent in the women of the Eastern and Mid-western United States.

Leslie Benedict thought she could define it. In the early days of her marriage she had tried to discuss it with her husband as she had been accustomed to talk with her father during her girlhood and young womanhood—freely and gaily and intelligently, lunge and riposte, very exhilarating, adult to adult.

"They lack confidence," she had said. "That's it. Unsure and sort of deferential. Like Oriental women."

"What do you think they should be? Masculine?"

"I was just speaking impersonally, darling. You know. Even their voices go up at the end of a declarative sentence, instead of down. It's sort of touching, as though they weren't sure you'd like what they've said and were willing to withdraw it. Like this. I asked that Mrs. Skaggs where she lived and she said, 'Unvalde.' Sure sorry, Bick. Pass right, gentlemen. Hi there, Miz Benedict, you're looking mighty party."

"Well, you know the old Texas saying. In Texas the cattle come first, then the men, then the horses and last the woman."

Now, as they drove into the vast air field and stopped at the floodlighted entrance, Leslie was thinking of these things without emotion, but almost clinically as she had learned she must if she would survive. Mindful of their two most distinguished guests in the crush and glare and clamor of the entrance they had somehow lost the ex-president.

"It's all right," Bick said.

"We'll pick him up inside. And we're all at the same table."

"Oh, Bick," Leslie called through the roar and din, "did you give him his card, I think it would have been better to give everyone a card just in case they were lost—oh, there he is in the doorway. Why—what?"

The olive-skinned aquiline face, the slim and elegant figure in full evening dress was easily distinguishable in the midst of the gigantic Texans in cream-colored tropics, in Texas boots, and great cream Stetsons, worn in arrogance and in defiance of the negligible universe outside their private world.

Even in the welter of waving arms, the shrill greetings, the boozing, the shouting, the shoving and mulling, the handshaking, the back slapping, "Well, if it ain't Lutie, you old sonofagun! You telling me you left that wind-blown sand-stung Mule-shoe town of yours and all those cow critters to come to this—" even in the midst of this hullabaloo it was plain that something was wrong.

"Hurry Bick. What is it?" The men behind the door ropes were none of your oily headwaiters full of false deference and distaste for the human race in evening clothes. Giants in khaki guarded the entrance, and on their slim hips their gun butts, black and evil, gleamed above the holster flaps.

And now, as Bick Benedict elbowed his way through the throng near the doorway he heard one of the most gigantic of these guardians say, as he snapped with a contemptuous thumb and middle finger the stiff card in his other hand. "Well, you sure look like a chio to me, and no Mexicans allowed at this party, that's orders and besides none's invited that's sure."

"No!" cried Bick Benedict, and battered his way past resistant flesh and muscle to reach the giant Cerberus. He called to him as he came. "Hi, Floyd! Floyd! Hold that, will you! Hold on there!" And the other man's head turning toward him, a curious greasy tone like oil over the olive skin, like dark eyes stony with outrage.

Bick reached them, he put a hand on the faultlessly tailored sleeve, the other on Floyd's steely wrist. "Look, Floyd, this gentleman is one of the honored guests this evening, he's going to be the new ambassador from Nuevo Banderia, down in South America. He's come all the way from Washington too." His voice was low, intense.

Floyd's sunburned face broke into a grin that rippled from the lips to the eyes, he spoke in the soft winning drawl of his native region.

"Well, I'm a hollow horn! I sure didn't go for to hurt your feelings. I made a lot of mistakes in my day, but this takes the rag off the bush." He held out his great hand. "Glad to make your acquaintance. Sure sorry, Bick. Pass right, gentlemen. Hi there, Miz Benedict, you're looking mighty party."

There isn't anything to do, Leslie said to herself as she slipped her hand through her guest's arm, there isn't anything to do but ignore the whole thing unless he speaks of it.

She chatted gaily. "It's going to be a shambles, so crowded. We don't have to stay late after the dinner if you want to leave—you and the others. It's just one of those things—everybody's supposed to show up—you know—like a Washington reception when you can't get near the buffet. You've probably never before in your life seen Stetsons worn with black dinner suits or women in model

evening gowns escorted by men in shirt sleeves and boots."

She looked about her. "Perhaps escorted isn't exactly the word."

Dinner, presaged by a jungle of tables and tables and tables, was to be served in the great domed main concourse. A bazaar, designated on the engraved invitations as a reception, was in progress in great sections and halls and rooms that next week would be restaurants, lunchrooms, baggage rooms, shops, offices.

Every ticket and travel counter to-night was a bar. Travel signs were up, neat placards bearing the names of a half-dozen air lines. And off the main hall were arrowed signs that said Ladies and others that said Colored Women. Orchids and great palms and ribs of blossoming trees. Banners, pennants, blinding lights.

The reception was now spilling over into the concourse, into the patio and out to the runways. Kim Kallomore's Band over there. Eddie Bogen's Band over here. The loud-speakers were on, the blare was frightening, it beat on the brain like a pile driver.

"Perhaps escorted isn't the word," Leslie had said somewhat maliciously. The men—the great mahogany-faced men bred on beef—who somehow had taken on physical dimensions in proportion to the vast empire they had conquered stood close together, shoulder to shoulder, as male as bulls: massive of shoulder, slim of flank, powerful, quiet and purposeful as Diesel engines.

On the opposite side of the room, huddled too, but restlessly, electric, yearning, stood the women in their satins and chiffons and jewels. The men talked together quietly, their voices low and almost musical in tone. The women were still as peacocks, they spread their handmade flounces and ruffles, white arms waved and beckoned.

The ambassador regarded this with an impassive face. "It is interesting," he said, "that the people of this country of Texas—

"Country?"

"It is like a country apart. It is different from any other North American state I have seen and I have travelled very widely here in the United States. It is curious that the citizens of Texas have adopted so many of the customs of the people they despise."

"How do you mean?" Leslie asked as though politely conversational. She knew

"In Latin countries—in Mexico and in Spain and Brazil and other South American countries including my own Nuevo Banderia—you often will find the men gathered separately from the women, they are talking politics and business and war and national affairs in which the women are assumed not to be interested."

"Or informed?" Leslie, the outspoken, looked at him. She felt admiration and almost affection for this man who had met insult with such dignity. "Here in Texas we are very modern in matters of machinery and agriculture and certain ways of living. Very high buildings on very broad streets. But very little high thinking or broad viewpoint. But they're the most hospitable people, they love entertaining visitors."

He inclined toward her a little formal diplomatic bow. "I am happily aware of that, madame."

"Oh, I didn't mean—I just sometimes. I forgot I'm a Texan by marriage. But thank you. I—you see they're wonderful in a crisis. In the last war—and World War I—



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the Texans were the most patriotic and courageous."

"Yes, I know. But war is, as you say, a crisis—an extremity, a cancer on the body of civilisation. It is what a people do and think in the time of health and peace that is most important."

He was very quiet and collected and somehow aloof in the midst of the turmoil all about them. Like Jordy's wife Leslie, she thought suddenly, Leslie, like Juana. He was speaking again, through the tears. "But you are not a Texan?"

"No. But my husband is, of course, and all his people since the beginning of—Oh, it must be dinner. They're all moving toward the other room. Our party is all at the same table, it's Number One on the card with our host, Jett Rink."

"Ah, yes, the host who spends twenty-five thousand dollars for a dash of barbecue!" He glanced about at the incredible scene. "I can well believe it now!"

"There's Jordan—there's my husband—with the others. Now if only we can stay together." She raised her voice to reach her husband struggling toward them. "Luz, Jordy?"

His shoulders were making a path for the royal pair behind him. "Haven't seen them," he shouted. "Catch on like a song line and we'll make it."

Breathless, dishevelled, they found themselves half an hour later seated on a platform at an orchid-covered table like a huge catafalque. From the hundreds of tables below a foam of faces stared up at them. Flashlights scared the air. Bands blared. The loud-speakers created pandemonium.

"And when?" said the king seated beside Leslie, "does our host appear?"

With awful suddenness the loud-speaker system went off. It had exaggerated every sound. Conversation had necessarily been carried on at a shout. Now the abrupt quiet was as shocking as the noise had been. The comparative silence stunned one.

From the dais where he sat with the guests of honor boomed the unctuous voice of Congressman Bale Clinch in tones which, under stress of the megaphones, had been meant for the confidential ear of his dinner neighbour alone. In the sudden silence they now rang out with all the strength and authority with which, in Washington Congress assembled, he frequently addressed his compatriots on the subject of Texas oil rights in general and Jett Rink's claims in particular.

"That wildcatting! Jett Rink is drunk again or I'll eat a live cat-tail! They're soberin' him up in there—" He stopped, aghast as a thousand faces turned toward him like balloons in a breeze.

Big though his voice was it had carried only through a fraction of the great concourse. But the repetition from mouth to mouth had taken only a few seconds. A roar, a Niagara of laughter, shook the room.

In the midst of this Luz Benedict appeared suddenly at the main table. She had not made her way through the main room, she seemed to have materialised out of the air. She was wearing a white chiffon gown, not quite fresh, no jewellery, her fair hair still tied back in the absurd horse-tail coiffure, though now a little spray of tiny fresh white orchids replaced the black ribbon that had held it.

She leaned over her father's chair as casually as though she were in the dining-room at the ranch. "Who told the joke?" she inquired casually. "I could use a laugh."

Bick Benedict turned his

head slightly, he bit the words out of the corner of his mouth. "Where've you been? And Jordy-dan?"

"Pardon me, miss," said a waiter, and placed a huge slab of rare roast beef before Bick Benedict. It almost covered the large plate, it was an inch thick, astonishingly like the map of Texas in shape, and it had been cut from the prime carcasses flown by refrigerated plane from Kansas City. Luz viewed it with distaste as she leaned over her father's shoulder.

"Hi, Jett!" bawled the cowboy movie star.

"Which is he?" the king inquired, not very astutely.

Congressman Bale Clinch answered somewhat impatiently. "The middle one, of course. The other two are strong-arms."

Now that the sound system had been restored the girl in red and the accompanying band were in full swing with a childish song which the State had adopted as its own.

The eyes of Texas are upon you,

All the livelong day.

The eyes of Texas are upon you,

You cannot get away—

Jordy Benedict reached the dais, he leaped upon it nimbly, crept beneath the table opposite his father's empty chair like a boy playing hide-and-seek, then he bobbed up to face Jett Rink.

As the tables below the diners had got to their feet leaving the slabs of red roast to congeal on their plates.

Jordy Benedict called no names. He looked absurdly young and slim as he faced the three burly figures.

"Stand away," he said quietly, "and fight."

His arm came back and up like a piston. A spurt of crimson from Jett Rink's nose made a bizarre red, white, and blue of his costume. A dozen hands pinned Jordy's arms, the flint-faced men held Jett Rink, the two glaring antagonists, pinioned thus, strained toward each other like caged and maddened animals.

Jett Rink jumped then, swinging hammock-like between the two guards whose arms held him. His feet, with all his powerful bulk behind them, struck Jordy low with practiced vicious aim so that the grunt as the boy fell could be heard by the guests of honor on the dais even above the blare of the band.

Quick though Bick was, Leslie was there before him, kneeling on the floor beside her son. For the moment he was mercifully unconscious. The first exquisite agony of this blow had distorted the boy's face, his body was twisted with it. His eyes were closed.

Bick, kneeling, made as though to rise now. His eyes were terrible as he looked at the panting Jett Rink. But Leslie reached across the boy's crumpled form; she gripped Bick's arm so that her fingers bit into his muscles. Quietly, as though continuing a conversation, she said, "You see, it's caught up with you, it's caught up with us. It always does."

But now the boy stirred and groaned and his eyes opened and his face was a mask of hideous pain as he looked up into the two stricken faces bent over him. The physician in him rose valiantly to meet the moment, the distorted lips spoke the truth to reassure them.

"Morphine . . . pain . . .

horrible . . . not serious . . .

morphine . . .

turn was too massive for the small-boned body. He walked not as a man who has authority and power but as a man does who boasts of these.

On his right walked a man, on his left walked a man, the two looked oddly alike in an indefinable way. Their clothes seemed too tight, as though they covered muscles permanently flexed, and their shaves were fresh, close, and unavailing. Their faces impulsive, the cold, hard eyes regnant as searchlights.

"Hi, Jett!" bawled the cowboy movie star.

"Which is he?" the king inquired, not very astutely.

Congressman Bale Clinch answered somewhat impatiently. "The middle one, of course. The other two are strong-arms."

Now that the sound system had been restored the girl in red and the accompanying band were in full swing with a childish song which the State had adopted as its own.

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All the livelong day.

The eyes of Texas are upon you,

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To be continued

ALL characters in the serials and short stories which appear in The Australian Women's Weekly are fictitious, and have no reference to any living person.

MOTHER



"We're going to make lots and lots of New Year Resolutions!"

BUTCH



"You're sure that you seen a cavity, Doc? You're not just trying to thwart my hold-up?"

It seems to me

A MONG the more unusual Christmas gifts on sale this season was a device which enables the householder to get a full-length view of a caller before opening the door.

It's a sort of sideways periscope thing and would undoubtedly be a boon to nervous females, owners of unlicensed radios, and anti-social characters.

But surely it would need to be operated in conjunction with drawn blinds and stockinged feet? You would have to be exceptionally strong-minded to keep the door shut when open windows cried your presence—unless the gadget revealed a maniac armed with a revolver.

Perhaps I am weak-minded, but if these devices come into common use I will be careful not to knock on the doors of their owners without a previous phone call.

The suspicion of having been viewed through a viewer and found wanting would be too, too destructive.

WHOEVER first thought of the idea of sending out calendars as an advertising medium was a genius in his way.

It is almost impossible to throw away a calendar. You may like one better than another, depending on whether you prefer big ones or little ones, whether you care more for the art work or the size of the numerals. But most of them are hung somewhere.

The best one usually goes in the kitchen. By best I mean the one with enough space between the figures to write "pay gas bill" and "dentist."

So far, I haven't heard of any Australian firm following the example of an Iowa (U.S.A.) car dealer. He visits his clients once a month and tears off last month's sheet. That's real service.

THE Federal Government Whip, Mr. Joe Gullett, made the month's most pertinent remark about television.

"It is bunkum to talk about television as a contribution to culture," he said. "Everyone knows that the first event to be televised will be the races."

Mr. Gullett was making the point that television is a luxury Australia cannot yet afford.

Aside from that point, however, it seems unnecessary to worry too much about the effect of television when it does come.

It is true that in America children are said to spend untold hours watching rubbish. This is unfortunate, but if every new invention were banned because of the harm it may do, we would still be in the horse-and-buggy age. There would be no cars, no aeroplanes.

It seems a bit foolish to be too much disturbed about television in the atomic age.

A GERMAN scientist has designed a machine which determines the correct height of heels which people should wear. Another way to ascertain this is if your feet hurt.

I READ a piece the other day saying that there were two kinds of desks which were impressive—the completely clear desk and the completely cluttered one.

This is a considerable relief to me, as I had always feared that the cluttered desk was a terrible handicap to one's advancement.

I still think the clear desk is the more successful-looking, and have worked out an idea for an invention to achieve it.

(If you think I harp too much on desks, it is because I spend so much time at one. Given half a chance, I could have been just as interested in a cupboard.

The idea is this: For those who type, the back half of the desk is divided into halves, which fall inward at the touch of a button.

When a caller is announced you press the button, and all the papers fall down a chute into a cupboard near your feet.

Those who don't use typewriters may simply cut a hole underneath a very large blotting-pad. Then, at the approach of footsteps, sweep all the papers under the pad.

You have to sort out the papers afterwards, of course, but this is a good idea, and enables you to throw last month's away.

THE Queensland policeman, Constable Pat Cranitch, who rescued a fisherman from drowning recently, already has a couple of medals for rescues.

In this, his latest exploit, he not only saved the man, but the rod, line, and hooked fish.

Whatever recognition he may receive for his latest life-saving feat, he also deserves some special notice from our tour fishermen.

I have seen a fisherman swept off rocks, stagger to shore after a touch-and-go encounter with a boiling sea, and then risk his life again trying to salvage rod and reel.

All he talked about for the rest of the day was the probable size of the lost fish. So you see what I mean.

AFTER his visit to Korea, General Eisenhower flew to a conference with officials at Wake Island, and went from there by warship to another conference at Honolulu.

Where are the beachcombers now? Do they still

Cling to the past by a blue lagoon,

Where the white surf pounds on the reef all day

And the palms are washed by a tropic moon?

The ocean that Cortez saw, would he not

Stare at it now with a wilder surmise?

The far-away isles that once spelled escape

Are aerodromes under the crowded skies.

Atolls are scared and razed to the sea,

And the sea moves in, and it covers all.

The clock moves on, and a sigh wastes breath,

The Pacific is shrunk to a conference hall.

THE CORPORAL CAUGHT THE COLONEL....

Out of Bounds

By WILLIAM CHAMBERLAIN

CPL OPIE McCALL, the problem child of Headquarters Company, was shooting dice with Private Dorgan behind the truck shed when the first sergeant found him. Opie's luck was in and Private Dorgan was not sorry for the interruption.

"On your feet, Mr. McCall," 1st Sgt. Jughead Simpson said. "The captain wishes words with you in the orderly room."

"Tell him I'm busy," Opie said briefly. "This is the McCall's lucky day."

"A matter of opinion," Sergeant Simpson said. "Do you come peacefully or do I have to drag you?"

Opie rolled a pair of aces. "Two ones!" he said in a shocked voice as he watched Private Dorgan rake in the money.

"First Sergeant Simpson, sometimes I think that you are bad luck for me. Perhaps it would be better if I went away somewhere else where first sergeants are more understanding."

"You'll go somewhere else if you don't get started for the orderly room," Sergeant Simpson said grimly. "I refer to the guardhouse, sonny. The captain ain't in a joking mood this morning."

"Then what's he want me for?"

"He's thought up a little speech that he wishes to make to you, ex-Corporal McCall."

"Oh-oh," Opie said thoughtfully. "I got a sort of premonition that I know what he wants to see me about."

"Well, it ain't to give you a decoration," Sergeant Simpson added darkly. "Forward march, ex-Corporal McCall."

Captain Herkimer leaned back in his chair and stared distastefully at Opie as the latter stopped in front of the desk and executed a snappy salute.

Captain Herkimer was a squat man with an outthrust jaw and hands like gourds stuck on fence posts. He regarded Opie without favor.

"Corporal McCall-reporting-to-the-captain-as-ordered-sir," Opie said, running his words together and giving Captain Herkimer an angelic smile.

It wasn't returned. "Take 'em off, McCall," the captain said bleakly. "By Godfrey, this time they stay off!"

"Take what off, sir?" Opie asked innocently. He knew well enough what was about to come off.

"Those corporal's stripes," Captain Herkimer said grimly. "Then you can report to the acting mess sergeant. He has got some windows to be washed — a lot of them — and some floors to be scrubbed and some garbage cans to be polished."

"Yes, sir, captain, sir," Opie said imperturbably.

He was nineteen and towheaded, and nothing bothered him. Feminine hearts fluttered when the word got around that Opie was in town, and tavern keepers put away their choicer items of glassware.

Opie was known to be unpredictable. Now he executed a flamboyant salute and turned to go.

"Come back here!" Captain Herkimer harked. "I'm not through with you yet! And stop waving your condemned arms at me. Why can't you behave, McCall? You cause me more trouble than all of the two hundred and sixty-two other men in this company put together."

"Trouble, sir?" Opie asked in a hurt voice.

"Trouble!" the captain said violently. "Yes-

terday morning you turned out for reveille in an aloha shirt and civilian shoes!"

"I had a late date, sir," Opie said righteously. "There wasn't time to change and I didn't think that the captain would want me to be absent from reveille, sir."

Captain Herkimer's neck got red. "Then the first sergeant sent you into town with the car to pick up the adjutant at the bus station and you go riding with a girl instead. The adjutant had to walk the two miles to the camp carrying his bag."

"Sir," Opie said, "I didn't exactly go riding with her. She was waiting at the gate, so I just sort of gave her a lift and —"

"Quiet!" Captain Herkimer yelled. "The adjutant still had to walk! Last night you missed retreat. At supper you started a riot in the mess hall because you didn't like the beans."

"Sir, the captain ought to have seen those beans —"

"Quiet! Later you short-sheeted all of the sergeants' bunks and put a stuffed rattlesnake under the company clerk's pillow! I wish I could send you to gaol for life! Go cut those stripes off!"

"Yes, sir," Opie said dispassionately. "Will that be all, sir?"

"Get out of here!" Captain Herkimer said violently.

Outside the orderly room Sergeant First Class Lederer — a lanky man who took a serious view of life and who worried about things — was looking at the bulletin board. Opie's face lighted up as he saw him.

"The very man I was looking for," he said. "Do you have a pocket knife about you, Sergeant First Class Lederer, sir?"

Sergeant Lederer turned slowly and looked at Opie without enthusiasm. He had just learned that Sergeant First Class Murphy, the mess steward, was going on emergency furlough and that Sergeant First Class Lederer would pinch-hit for him in the interim. The thought filled Sergeant Lederer with a growing uneasiness.

"What do you want a knife for?" he asked suspiciously.

"The good Captain Herkimer has suggested that I make certain changes in my uniform, Sergeant First Class Lederer, sir," Opie told him without rancor. "Perhaps you will be good enough to help?"

"What changes?"

"Nothing much," Opie said cheerfully. "The captain just feels that maybe stripes don't suit my personality."

"So you've been busted again," Sergeant Lederer grunted. "I'm not surprised. What was it this time?"

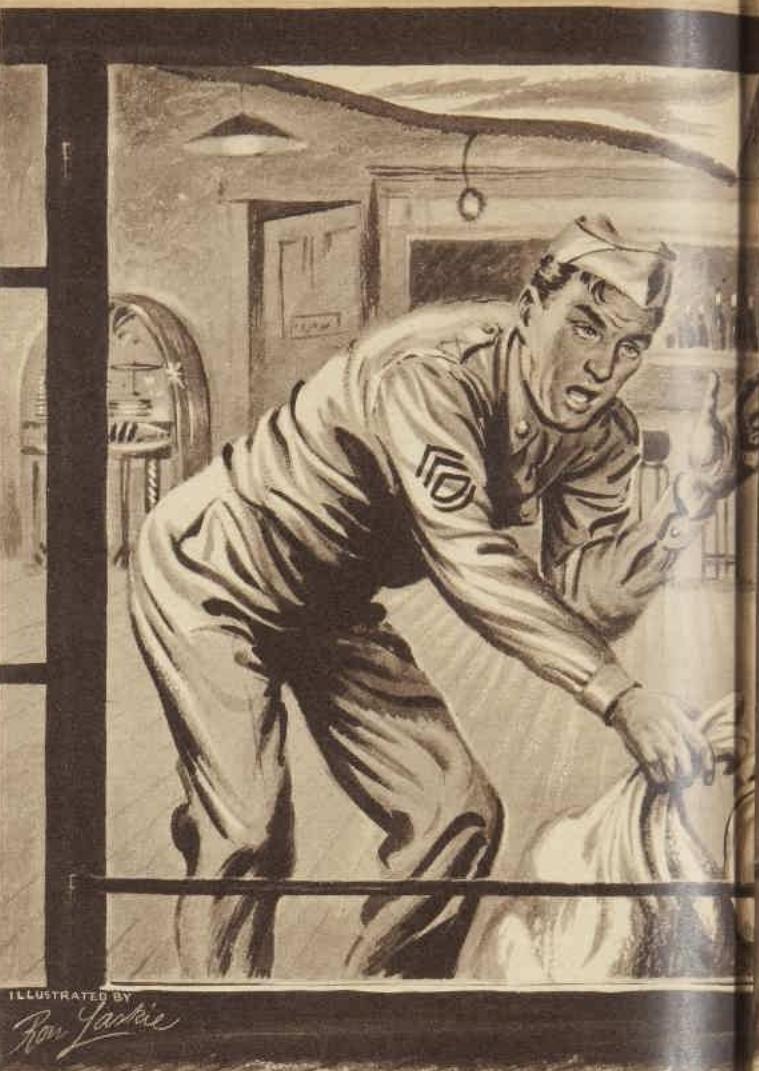
"I wouldn't remember all the details," Opie said vaguely, holding out an arm. "Just cut them away gently, Sarge. I wouldn't want 'em to think I was mad at them."

Opie was washing windows in the mess hall late the next afternoon when Sergeant Lederer approached. A worried line creased the sergeant's brow and, for a moment, he stood staring blankly ahead and paying no attention to his assistant.

Then he scowled and looked again at the slip of paper in his hand — a special menu which the first sergeant had just given him.

"You know anything about chickens?" he asked sourly at last.

Opie laid down his wet rag and his ex-



ILLUSTRATED BY
Ron Jarratt

pression became interested. "Sure, I know about chickens, Sarge," he said enthusiastically. "What kind you want to know about? Blondes, brunettes —"

"It's not that kind of chickens," Sergeant Lederer said, still more sourly. "It's the kind you cook up with dumplings."

Opie looked disgusted. "Naw. I wouldn't know about that kind. Why?"

"Because it says here that I got to serve chickens for Sunday dinner to-morrow," Sergeant Lederer said morosely. "That's why."

"So what?" Opie asked in a practical voice. "Let the first cook do the worrying. I think I'll go down to the canteen and get a drink. Washing windows makes me thirsty."

"I think that you'll go over to the truck shed and get the car," Sergeant Lederer contradicted grimly.

"The first cook can't cook any chickens if he hasn't got any chickens to cook. The commissary is out of chickens. So you and I have got to rustle up some chickens some place else. Get the car!"

"Why don't you just have creamed chip beef?" Opie wanted to know.

"We been having that all week anyway."

"Because this special menu says that we have chicken and dumplings," Sergeant Lederer told him in an exasperated voice.

"The colonel is asking the division commander to eat Sunday dinner with us so that the general can see what a fine mess we got."

"He'd better take the general to a restaurant," Opie advised. "The cooks we got couldn't even boil water without burning it."

"Get the car," Sergeant Lederer said wearily.

Col. Adam Spiller sat with his feet on his desk and scowled at the communication from the division chief of staff which had come in the afternoon mail.

After five paragraphs devoted to wigging the Umpteenth Infantry for minor peccadilloes, the chief of staff really got down to business and levelled a blast at Colonel Spiller concerning one Ah Soong.

This Ah Soong was an ancient and crafty Chinese who operated — with the connivance of Colonel Spiller, so the chief of staff hinted — a combined store, truck garden, restaurant, poultry farm, juke joint, pawnshop, and beer parlor half a mile outside the high wire fence which enclosed the Umpteenth's regimental area.

Ah Soong would, the communication stated emphatically, be thoroughly investigated at once. If any evidence of illicit practices was discovered, Col. Adam Spiller was to take steps or else. The thing was signed: "Babson, Colonel, Chief of Staff."

"What steps?" Colonel Spiller grumbled to Captain Millard, his regimental intelligence officer. "If I've investigated that copper-colored Confucius once I've investigated him a hundred times! And what did it get me? Nothing!"

"Yes, sir," Captain Millard said. He was a slight man with a wispy moustache, and he was troubled with dyspepsia.

Right now he was more interested in getting away to the canteen for more dyspepsia tablets than he was in the activities of Ah Soong.

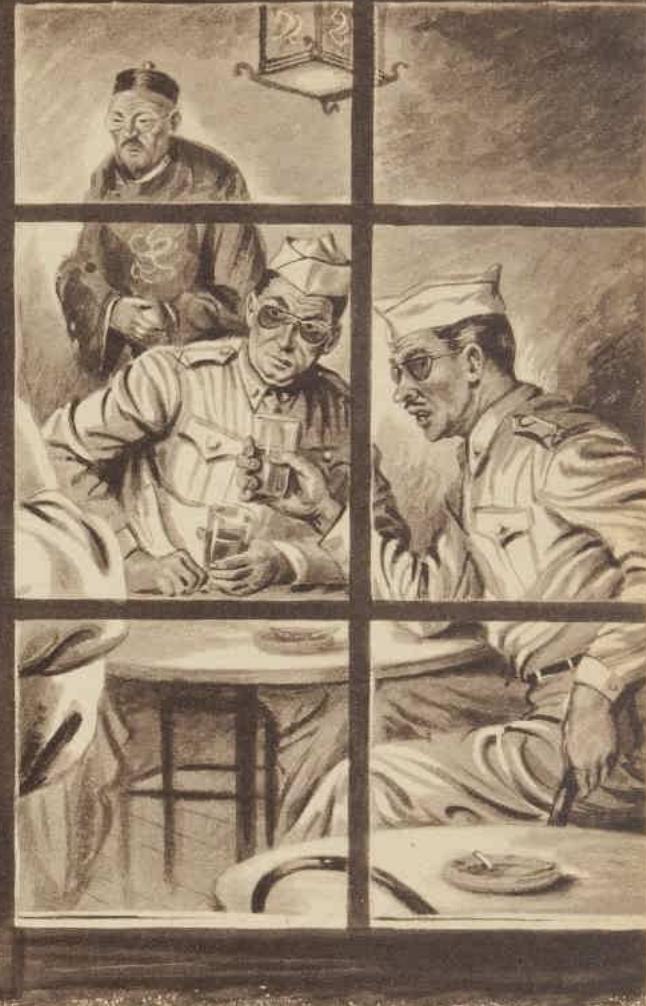
"Well," Colonel Spiller said sourly, "I guess we've got to investigate him for the hundred-and-first time if I don't want that baboon Babson on my neck. You got any idea of anything to do that we haven't done before, Millard?"

"No, sir," Captain Millard said vacantly.

Colonel Spiller glared at him. The colonel was a large and violent man with the battlefields of Salerno and Anzio behind him.

He considered the details of peacetime administration to be a waste of time and an occupation fit only for congenital idiots.

"Bah!" he said crossly. "Well, think one



up. You're supposed to be Intelligence officer, aren't you?"

"Yes, sir," Captain Millard said in a hopeful voice.

The colonel scowled, then transferred his attention back to the communication from the chief of staff.

"Take steps!" he grunted again. "What steps do those chockheads at headquarters think I haven't taken? That skinny Charley Clam down there outside the fence knows every move we make. He gets the word whenever we're about to pay him a visit, and by the time we get there, complete with staff cars and M.P.'s and the Black Maria, the joint is so clean that it looks like a Sunday school!"

"Maybe we could go in disguise, sir," Captain Millard said. He felt that he had to say something to quiet the colonel; if he didn't, he'd never get away to go for more tablets.

"Bah!" the colonel said. "If you think I'm going down there in false whiskers and a deer hunter's hat, Doctor Watson—"

"No, sir," Captain Millard said despondently. "I meant maybe we could—oh—put on GI uniforms and act like a couple of recruits. Ah Soong likes to entertain recruits, sir, I've been told."

Colonel Spiller squinted at him for a moment, then leaned forward and slapped him on the shoulder. "By Godfrey, Millard, maybe you've got something there! We'll do it!"

"Yes, sir," Captain Millard said sourly. He wished that he had kept his mouth shut. It had never occurred to him that the colonel would actually fall in with any suggestion of his—the colonel usually didn't.

"Get hold of the GI stuff," Colonel Spiller said enthusiastically, "and meet me here at seven-thirty. We'll catch that Cantonese Jesse James so far off base that he'll look like a Brooklyn Dodger!"

"Yes, sir," Captain Millard said.

"And get word to Herkimer—he's acting provost marshal this month, isn't he?—to

stay away from Ah Soong's to-night. I don't want him busting in on us. He's too friendly with that confounded Babson, anyway. I don't trust him."

"Yes, sir," Captain Millard said.

The sun was going down as Opie McCall drove the car through the main gate of the camp at a sedate pace, Sergeant Lederer sitting tense and wary in the front seat beside him. Opie didn't usually drive this way; usually he drove like a demented fireman going to a bad blaze.

Curiosity finally got the better of the sergeant after Opie had meticulously checked around the M.P. at the gate and was bowing down the highway at a modest twenty-five miles an hour.

"How come?" Sergeant Lederer asked.

Opie cautiously slowed the car to avoid a shallow hole in the road. "How come what, Sarge?"

"How come you're driving like you were going to a funeral? It's not the way you usually drive. You usually drive like a drunk coming home from a football game."

"I've reformed," Opie said piously. "I've seen the error of my ways, Sarge. From now on I'm going to do good."

Sergeant Lederer grunted sceptically. "That I got to see," he said, but puzzled wrinkles furrowed his forehead as Opie stopped at a railroad crossing, peered cautiously in both directions, and then eased the car across.

It was not a week ago that Opie had bounced him half out of the car at this same crossing, Sergeant Lederer remembered. "What worked this miracle?" he asked suspiciously.

"I been reading a book," Opie said absently. "It changed everything, Sarge."

"What book?"

"One about a do-gooder named Don Quixote," Opie said. "He was a character who went around tilting windmills and doing other

"My sainted aunt," said Opie in a shocked voice, "Captain Herkimer's out there."

good deeds. I've lived a wasted life up to now, Sarge."

"You can say that again," Sergeant Lederer agreed. "How the heck do you tilt a windmill?"

"I haven't got that far yet," Opie admitted. "One good heave."

"Nuts!" Sergeant Lederer interrupted sourly. "Take the turn to the left. We'll try Al's Supermarket first."

"Try Al's Supermarket for what?"

"Chickens! What do you think for what?"

"I forgot," Opie said in a casual voice. "I still think creamed chip beef is your best bet, Sarge."

"If you could think you might still be a corporal," Sergeant Lederer said crossly. "Head for Al's."

"O.K., Sarge," Opie told him. "McCall's your man."

It was close to eight o'clock when Opie stopped the car at the town's edge again. For two hours they had been treading the winding streets and visiting markets. No chickens. Opie leaned his forearms across the steering wheel and yawned.

"Looks like the chickens don't care whether the general thinks we got a good mess or not," he said. "I told you we'd better have creamed chip beef."

"Shut up," Sergeant Lederer said violently. He was worried—badly worried. He'd be stripping the stripes of his own arms tomorrow if he didn't get those chickens, he thought. Captain Herkimer was a hard man who didn't listen to excuses. "I'm trying to think."

Opie still leaned on his forearms while he whistled through his teeth. Getting chickens for the general's dinner was none of his funeral, he thought.

Still, Sergeant Lederer was a pretty good guy and they'd been through a lot together. Maybe he ought to help him out a little. He sat back casually.

"I know where you can get chickens, Sarge," he said.

Sergeant Lederer, deep in his gloomy thoughts, started as though he had been suddenly pricked with a bayonet. "Why didn't you say so before this?"

"You never asked me," Opie told him practically.

"Well, where can I get chickens?"

"At Ah Soong's place," Opie said. "The old geezer's got plenty of chickens."

Sergeant Lederer choked. "You're a great help! You know perfectly well that Ah Soong's place is out of bounds! You know, too, that the colonel will take the hide off any Umpteenth dogface that gets caught there."

"Well," Opie said. "Captain Herkimer is going to take your hide off if you don't get those chickens, anyway."

Sergeant Lederer lapsed into a morose silence. What Opie had said was only too true, he reflected gloomily. And Captain Herkimer could do a better job of hide removing than the colonel could; Captain Herkimer was closer. The sergeant made up his mind reluctantly.

"O.K.," he said in a resigned voice. "Head for Ah Soong's. I might as well get hanged for a sheep as a lamb."

"Take it easy," Opie told him. "We won't get caught. Just leave everything to McCall, Sarge. He's your man."

"What makes you think we won't get caught?"

"Ah Soong's a pal of mine—in a hostile sort of a way," Opie said, easing the car into gear. "He'll do anything for McCall."

"I might have known it," Sergeant Lederer

said morosely. "Well, step on it. Let's get it over with."

Ah Soong's place was a rambling, barn-like structure set a hundred yards back from the highway at the end of a dusty dirt road. Opie stopped the car in front.

Yellow light flowed from windows that were none too clean and music bubbled from a juke box inside.

"O.K.," Opie said. "In we go, Sarge."

Sergeant Lederer's stomach felt hollow as he stepped down into the ankle-deep dust, but he squared his shoulders and followed Opie up the steps to the low verandah. The latter peered through a window and then flapped a hand nonchalantly.

"Nobody in there but a couple of recruits drinking beer," he said. "You haven't got a thing to worry about, Sarge."

He opened the front door and went in, Sergeant Lederer close at his heels. There was a big room with round tables. There was a juke box at one end, also a bar.

Two men sat at one of the tables, glasses of beer in front of them; they wore dark sunglasses and their caps were pulled low on their foreheads and their uniforms were stiff and new and ill-fitting. "Recruit" stuck out all over them.

"Just look at 'em!" Opie said loudly. "The Army must be getting awful hard up for men these days. And in here lapping up beer when they ought to be home in bed. I got a good notion to—"

"You got a good notion to nothing!" Sergeant Lederer said firmly. "We're going to get those chickens and get out of here!"

They went on toward the bar and, after a minute, the back door opened and Ah Soong came through. Black eyes looked spitefully at them out of a face as wrinkled as an old prune as Ah Soong tugged his hands into his long sleeves.

"You likee beer, eh?" he asked. "Awli! Catchee beer."

"Might as well—" Opie began, and then winced as Sergeant Lederer kicked him sharply on the ankle.

"Just remember you're doing good from now on," Sergeant Lederer said. "Just tell this guy we want some chickens and let's set out of here."

He felt acutely uneasy all at once—there was something vaguely familiar about those recruits. One was a slight man with a wispy moustache who held his beer mug in front of his face; the other sat with his back to the bar and his shoulders hunched up around his ears.

Opie McCall was asking, "You got chickee, John?"

Opie flapped his arms and crowed. "Chickee for make dumpling, huh?"

"Hah!" Ah Soong said. "Chickee for dumpling. How many chickee?"

Sergeant Lederer said in a worried voice, "Tell him two dozen. And tell him to hurry. I got a feeling we're being watched."

"Naw," Opie assured him. "We're not being watched. You just got the spooks, Sarge." He held up both hands and wagged them in front of Ah Soong's face. "Catchee two dozen, huh?"

"Can do," Ah Soong said.

Continuing . . .

Out of Bounds

"Maybe you likee nice beer while Ah Soong catchee chickee?"

Opie hesitated, struggling with his better nature. His better nature lost. "Sure," he said. "You can treat me, Sergeant First Class Lederer, sir. I have just remembered that Private Dorgan has got all my money right now."

Sergeant Lederer said, "O.K.," in a worried voice and slid a fifty-cent piece across the bar. Ah Soong took it, bit it, and then dropped it into an old-fashioned cash drawer. He drew two mugs of beer and then disappeared through the back door again.

"A character," Opie said, lifting his Stein. "As dishonest as the day is long. Well, here's looking at you, Sarge. You ever see a lousier-looking pair of recruits in your life?"

Over at the table, Colonel Spiller choked on his beer and the back of his neck began to get red. "I've heard that voice before," he snarled under his breath to Captain Millard. "It's that confounded McCall! Just wait until I get my hands on—"

"Sir," Captain Millard said unhappily, "maybe we'd better just sit quiet. If you said anything to him, they'd recognize us and the word might get back to the general. He might not understand us being here in GI uniforms. They'll get their chickens and be gone in a minute, sir."

Colonel Spiller struggled weakly with himself, then buried his nose in his beer. "Ar-r-r!" he said. "You and your smart idea. Well, there'll come a day!"

"You, there," Opie called out suddenly. "You recruit with the dinky little moustache! What's your name?"

"Uh," Captain Millard said. "Jones."

"Say 'sir' when you speak to me," Opie tol' him severely. "You are addressing an ex-corporal, recruit."

"Sir," Captain Millard said in a hollow voice. Colonel Spiller's neck got redder. "Yes, sir."

Opie tipped up his mug and drained the last of the beer while Sergeant Lederer walked slowly to the front door to peer out into the night.

Opie returned his attention to Captain Millard. "Where've I seen you before, Recruit Jones?" he asked. "I couldn't forget a dial like that. Take off those sunglasses, and when you get back to barracks shave off that moth-eaten moustache. It looks awful."

"Uh—" Captain Millard began, but he was saved by Ah Soong.

The latter came in through the back door, carrying a sack in each hand. The sacks bulged and quaked and made muffled squawking sounds as Sergeant Lederer returned from where he had been peering out into the night.

Headlights had just turned off the highway toward Ah Soong's, and he was worried again; his worry was increased by the sight of those animated sacks.

"Gosh oh gosh!" he groaned. "They're alive!"

"Sure," Opie told him matter-of-factly. "You don't think that Ah Soong runs a butchershop, do you? Let the first cook take care of 'em; he ain't done an honest day's work

since the Battle of Gettysburg, anyway. Pay that man, Sarge, and let's go."

"Thutty dolla," Ah Soong said. "Nice chickee."

Sergeant Lederer counted out the money and picked up one of the sacks; Opie was already at the front door with the other. Captain Millard buried his nose in his beer as Sergeant Lederer passed; the colonel hunched his shoulders higher about his ears.

Opie had his hand on the doorknob; was starting to turn it. Then he stopped suddenly, his aplomb deserting him for a moment.

"Oh, my sainted aunt!" he said in a shocked voice. "Captain Herkimer's out there with the chief of staff and three M.P.s."

Sergeant Lederer groaned—he had known this was too good to last. Well, he was a dead duck now.

At the table Colonel Spiller glared murderously at his companion. "I thought I told you to tell Herkimer to stay away from here to-night!" he snarled.

Captain Millard looked scared. "I did tell him, sir," he protested. "He must have smelled something. I thought that he had a kind of funny look on his face when I left him."

"That Judas Iscariot!" Colonel Spiller growled. "I can see Babson's fine Italian hand in this! We've got to get out of here! They'll laugh us out of the division if the word ever gets around that the M.P.s caught us down here drinking beer in GI uniforms."

"Yes, sir," Captain Millard said helplessly.

Up front, Opie suddenly clicked the lock on the front door and came back, dragging his sack of chickens. Ah Soong had prudently disappeared.

"Come on, Sarge!" Opie yelled at Sergeant Lederer. "I know a back way out of this booby trap!"

He trotted around behind the bar, still towing his sack of chickens, and Sergeant Lederer followed him.

"Wait a minute!" Colonel Spiller bellowed. "We're coming, too!"

"Come on, then!" Opie yelled back.

He thought that he had heard that voice before somewhere, but he didn't have time to speculate on that now.

Colonel Spiller was charging across the floor, hustling Captain Millard before him, as Opie followed Sergeant Lederer through the back door. Already feet were scraping noisily on the verandah and someone was banging vigorously at the front door and yelling "Open up in there!"

Colonel Spiller and the captain both tried to go through the back door at once and jammed together there for a moment, the colonel swearing furiously. Opie dropped his sack of chickens for a moment, got hold of the colonel's arm, and yanked hard.

"Come on, stupid!" he yelled. "You're the dumbest recruit I ever saw! You want to land in clink before you've even drawn your first pay!"

Colonel Spiller came through with a rush, stumbled over the sack of chickens, and went down to his knees, his sunglasses coming loose to dangle from one ear.

Opie glanced at him as he turned, slammed the door and bolted it; then jerked spasmodically and turned back to take a second look. His mouth dropped slowly open.

"Oh, my Godfrey!" he said in horrified voice. "It's the colonel!"

Beyond him Sergeant Lederer was standing with his own mouth open and his eyes beginning to glaze a little.

"Never mind that now!" Colonel Spiller grumbled. "Where's the back way out of this condemned place that you know about?"

Opie blinked twice and then swallowed as he picked up the chicken sack. There was a long empty hallway lighted with a single electric bulb and with a door at the far end, and Opie led the way down it.

Behind him he heard the smash as Ah Soong's front door gave way, then the heavy clump of G.I. shoes across the floor. Have to hurry, he thought. Sergeant Lederer was at the far end of the hallway, and with a door at the far end, and Opie led the way down it.

He started back down the narrow hallway dragging the two sacks of squawking chickens. The colonel stared uncertainly after him for a moment; then followed. Sergeant Lederer was frantically trying to find the door.

The door was shaking under heavy blows now and beyond it Opie could hear Captain Herkimer's voice, "Break it down. I saw four men in here, and I'm going to get 'em, by Godfrey!"

Another voice said nastily, "Go ahead, sergeant. I'll be responsible for the damage; Colonel Spiller can pay for it."

"That confounded Babson!" Colonel Spiller grumbled. "I've a—"

"Save it, sir," Opie advised. "Stand by to open the door when I give the word. These chickens will go through there like bats out of hell when I open the sacks."

For a moment the colonel gaped as Opie slashed at the strings which tied the sacks; then he grinned.

"Hah!" he said. "Close air support, eh? Say the word, soldier. Spiller's your man!"

The door was beginning to bulge as Opie straightened, keeping the sacks closed with his fingers. "Open her up, sir," he said, and the colonel pulled the bolt on the door.

Captain Herkimer's red face was there, peering through, and behind him were the chief of staff and three M.P.s. Opie yanked the first sack wide; followed it with the second.

There was a sudden riot of flapping wings and raucous squawks, and Opie caught a fleeting glimpse of Captain Herkimer's horror-stricken face. Then the doorway was blotted out by a solid wall of flying feathers.

thought miserably, make much difference whether the door was stuck or not.

After what Opie had done to the colonel, everything was busted, anyway. Opie pushed by to haul at the doorknob.

"It ain't stuck," Opie grunted. "It's locked."

"Do something!" Colonel Spiller said in a hoarse voice.

"Do something, confound it!"

"Get me out of this or you'll be following around behind the garbage truck for the rest of your lives!"

Opie squinted at him, his confidence beginning to come back. After all, he thought, he had nothing to lose; they couldn't bust him any lower than he was already.

"Keep your shirt on, sir," he said in a crisp voice. "I think maybe I got a scheme."

"Well, scheme it then," Colonel Spiller grunted.

Someone was rattling the knob of the door which led to the bar, and voices bellowed angrily outside as Opie pulled a bunch of keys from his pocket and tossed them to Sergeant Lederer.

"You ought to find one of 'em that'll fit," he said; then added succinctly, "I ain't just fry me, is all. I got no chickens for the general's dinner. I'm out thirty bucks from the mess fund. I stood around while you made smart cracks about the colonel being a recruit. Nope, nothing much. I'm a dead duck, McCall."

Opie didn't answer. He had just remembered that he had told the captain that he had a dial that only a mother could love, and had called the colonel a dumb recruit. McCall was a dead duck, too, he guessed.

Opie met Sergeant Lederer outside the mess hall the next evening. Opie was wearing freshly starched khaki, and corporal's stripes again graced his sleeves. Sergeant Lederer looked at them.

"You ought to put pins in 'em," he said.

"The McCall doesn't mind sewing them up," Opie said fondly. "It's a labor of love, Sergeant First-class Lederer. You should have seen the captain's face when the colonel told him to put 'em back."

" Didn't like it, huh?"

"He did not," Opie said positively.

"Well," Sergeant Lederer said in a thoughtful voice, "he didn't like it much when we had creamed chip beef for the general to night, either. He told the colonel that it was my fault, but the colonel said blow that, and chewed him out. But good!"

"Ah," Opie said, pleasure in his voice. "That I should have seen. Would you care to join me in a little trip to town, Sergeant First-class Lederer, sir?"

"What you going to do it town?" Sergeant Lederer asked suspiciously. "Tilt more windmills?"

"Nope," Opie said. "Tilt a glass, sir. Tilt a glass."

Sergeant Lederer's face relaxed. "Lead on, Corporal McCall," he murmured. "Lederer's your man."

Above the racket Sergeant Lederer was yelling that he had got the door open, and Opie and the colonel went down the hall at a run. Behind them bedlam reigned in the bar; it was punctuated by profane and angry yells.

As they sprinted out of Ah Soong's back door and into the cool night, the colonel grunted to Opie, "Prettiest delaying action I ever saw, soldier, and I've seen some beauts!"

He skidded around the corner to pile into his staff car with Captain Millard, and they roared away into the night.

Opie paused long enough to yank the ignition wires out of the staff car which had brought the M.P.s, and then hopped into his car. Sergeant Lederer was already there, and they speeded out on to the main highway.

For ten minutes they rode in silence. Then Sergeant Lederer sighed heavily. "Private Lederer," he said in a mournful voice, trying out the sound.

"Well, I started out that way; I guess I can get used to it again."

"Aw, probably nothing will happen," Opie said unconvincedly.

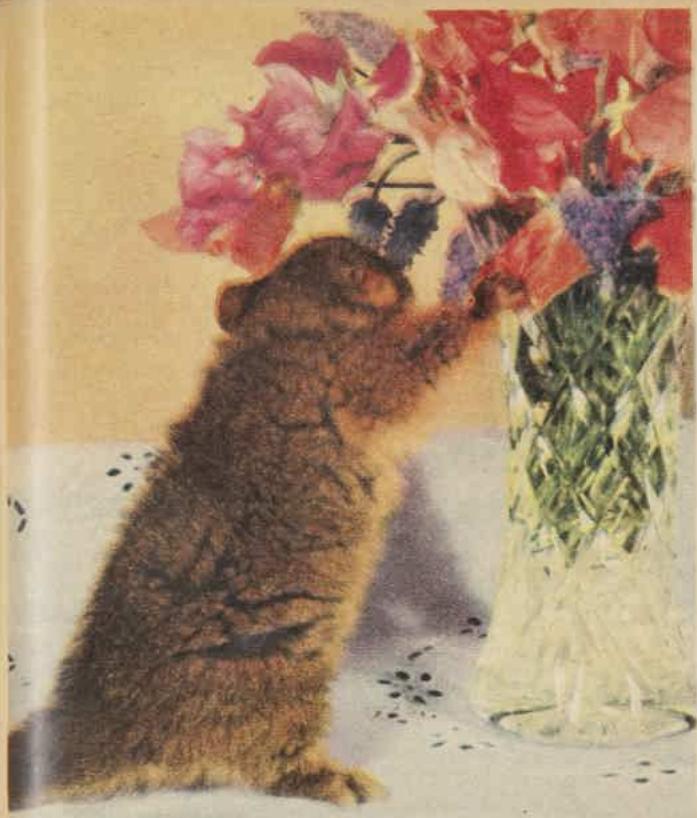
Sergeant Lederer sighed again. "Nothing much," he agreed morosely. "They'll just fry me, is all. I got no chickens for the general's dinner. I'm out thirty bucks from the mess fund. I stood around while you made smart cracks about the colonel being a recruit. Nope, nothing much. I'm a dead duck, McCall."

Opie didn't answer. He had just remembered that he had told the captain that he had a dial that only a mother could love, and had called the colonel a dumb recruit. McCall was a dead duck, too, he guessed.

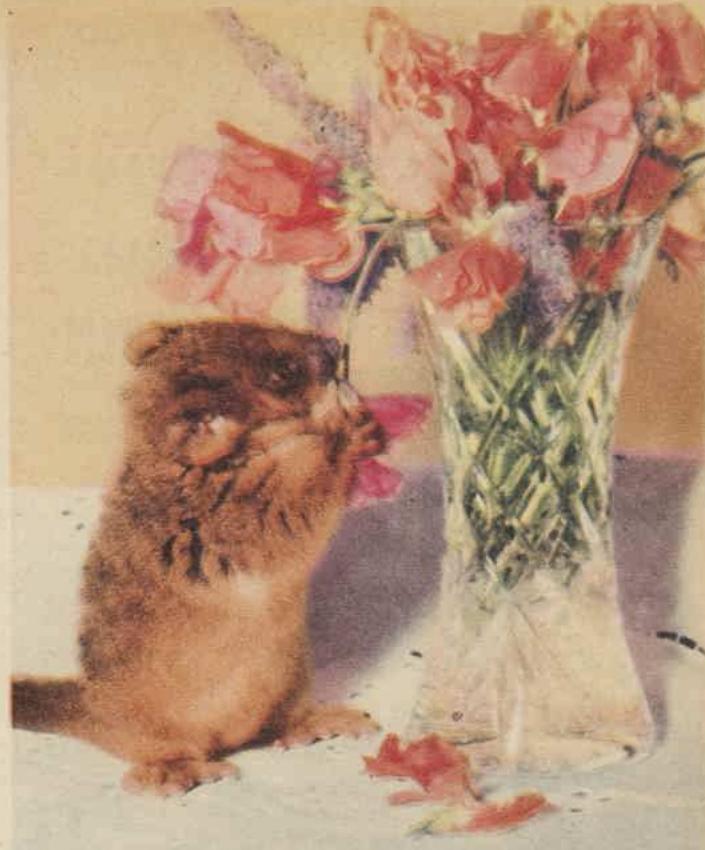


"Eighteen years ago this was the prize catch of 'Whispering Pines.'"

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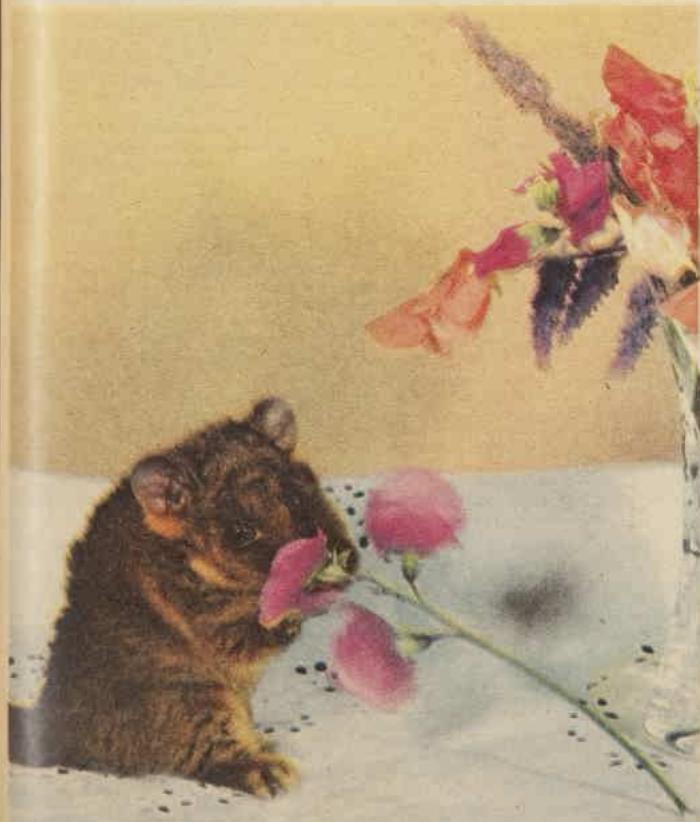
Ah, sweetpeas, my favorite flower . . .



Such color . . .

PLAYING POSSUM

Pictures of Spike the possum were taken by staff photographer Bob Cleland. Spike is cared for by Mrs. Robert Bennett, of Balmoral, Sydney.



Such perfume . . .



Such flavor !

The ONLY COMPLETELY EFFECTIVE INSECT SPRAY IN AUSTRALIA WHICH DOES NOT STAIN



Any insect spray which contains D.D.T. will leave a white deposit on clothes, curtains, carpets and all room surfaces.

Another point: Doctors and Health authorities have declared that D.D.T. insect sprays should not be used near food or where excessive skin contact is likely.

There is no D.D.T. in Mortein.

Mortein knocks down and kills flies and all insect pests with amazing speed and certainty because it contains the most powerful (yet safest) insecticidal ingredients in the world. Mortein contains Pyrethrum activated with Piperonyl Butoxide.

Mortein (without D.D.T.) is the ONE completely effective, non-poisonous, non-staining insect spray.



YOUTH SUMS UP

Conducted by BETTY BEST

New Year resolutions: are they too hard to live up to?



LOTS of Australian teenagers look upon the tradition of New Year resolutions as pointless and old-fashioned. Some take the pessimistic view that nobody ever keeps them, anyway.

On the other hand, there is the school which sticks faithfully to the practice, undaunted by past failures, because its members feel that the end of the year is a good time to take stock of the past and try to make the future more successful.

Take Joan, for instance, a stenographer whose 18th year has been blighted by the boy she met on her last holiday who promised to write to her and never got around to it.

Joan says she realises that no news for five months makes it pretty obvious that his was a lightly given promise, so she is going to:

"Tear up the letter I was going to send because I nearly persuaded myself that he might never have received the first one I wrote."

"Take his picture off my dressing-table and stop dragging his name into every second conversation with my girl-friends."

"Start accepting any invitations to go out and stop being bitter."

James, aged 19, a shop assistant in a music store, says that he's never made New Year resolutions before because he can't see any reason to make a special decision about anything just because of the date.

"But this is the first year that I have really had a steady girl-friend, so I've decided to turn over two new leaves," says James.

"On the nights we go out I shall always try to go and pick her up at home and take her back after the show. No more of this meeting her there stuff and putting her on a bus afterwards."

"Secondly, I shall try to make friends with her parents instead of considering them as old grumpies."

Bill is 18 and knows James quite well. He thinks that James has been too rash.

"Oh, people are always talking about these things," he says. "But they never have a hope of keeping them."

"Actually, I think it's a bad thing to make them. There's no visible change between the Old Year and the New, so why try to change yourself? This New Year business was merely a convention invented by our ancestors, and if you ask me it's a bit dangerous."

"Take this business of making resolutions about your girl. You get so proud of your

ideas that you feel you've got to tell her about them. That's O.K. for the first impression, and you're doing fine. Then comes trouble when one evening you just can't keep to them completely."

"Next thing you know she's throwing it in your face and with good reason—it's your own fault. If you really like your girl enough to make resolutions about her, it's better to keep making them all the year round."

Harold is 16, and has another reason for avoiding resolutions about girl-friends:

"I won't risk it because I made so many last year about not spending too much time with girls and then went to a New Year's party and met someone there who spent the pest six months helping me break the lot. It's like tempting fate."

Kate is 19, and says that she is not making any resolutions about boys because she's quite satisfied with her present attitude towards them:

"But at the beginning of the year I always try to make up my mind to have more early nights, budget my wages like mad, and do a bit more work. I don't guarantee that it works, but it's a good time to try."

Fifteen-year-old Donald, who wants to be a commercial artist and is now an office boy with an art firm, has more or less the same idea.

"I want to help at home as much as I can because it's an awfully easy thing to forget if you're not careful," he says. "But most of all

I want to work my hardest to get into the Art Room before the end of next year."

A brother and sister who have decided to co-operate on their resolutions are Bob, 18, and Eleanor, 17:

"We've been getting in each other's hair all this year," says Bob. "I've been feeling that Ellie was getting too big for her boots and too demanding about being taken to dances."

"When I told her that I wanted to manage my own dates without her butting in, she got mad and reminded me that she was only a year younger than me, anyhow."

"Well, just lately I've been thinking that's pretty right, and trying to remember how I felt last year. I was a bit shy about going to some things myself. I guess it's only fair to take Ellie sometimes till she gets some boy-friends of her own."

Eleanor is promising to respond by ironing a few shirts now and then, not acting like a kid when Bob does take her out and—trying to find those boy-friends as soon as possible.

DISC DIGEST

B10119, an imported recording.

THEN there was that inspired pianist Dino Lipatti playing Mozart's "Sonata No. 8 in A Minor" on two discs, LX8788-9. This is a magnificent performance of a beautiful work, and if you have any interest in impeccable musicianship you should hear it.

Did you come across Edith Piaf's "Le Chevalier de Paris" and "Il Fait Bon T'Aimer"? They're on DCF66, and "Chevalier," a dramatic narrative, is one of the best of this French singer's many marvellous songs.

—BERNARD FLETCHER.

Mortein plus

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NON-STAINING • NON-POISONOUS

ST 42-52

OUR CORONATION TOUR CONTEST

More details of thrilling time in London for the winner

With our exciting Coronation Tour Contest closing on January 16, we are happy to announce further details cabled from London of the holiday-of-a-lifetime being planned there for the winner and companion. The highlight of the world tour will be, of course, viewing the Coronation procession from 35-guinea window seats in a room where a day-long champagne buffet will be provided.

FILM magnate J. Arthur Rank has invited the winner and companion to visit England's famous Pinewood and Ealing film studios. They will be photographed with famous film stars on the set and will dine at the studio restaurant.

The intimate hotel The Green Park, just off Piccadilly, which has been chosen as the London headquarters for our guests, is a favorite with celebrities, who appreciate its quiet and exclusive atmosphere.

Among its distinguished clients are the ballerina Alicia Markova, Ingrid Berg-

man, Roberto Rossellini, Zsa Zsa Gabor, and Robert Donat.

Our winner and friend, in the comfort of their hotel rooms, will be able to witness on television any Coronation festivities that they do not attend in person.

In addition to the crowd of engagements that has already been announced for the unforgettable London fortnight are a visit to the B.B.C. television studios and a river trip down the Thames to inspect its most famous landmarks.

On this page we publish further £10 progress awards, chosen from the great mass of excellent entries already received.

Wonderful days

I STOOD in St. George's Terrace waiting for my bus. A very young mother with a very young baby stood waiting also. She kept opening the shawl and looking very lovingly down to see if the baby was all right, and, satisfying herself it was, would gently kiss it.

The years rolled back and I remembered, and with a lump in my throat I stepped into the bus and came home to write this, my story.

It is difficult to explain happiness, it is something we feel within, but hard to express in words. When I look back on my life, I realise there has been no middle road for me; it has been the hill tops or the valley, yet, if I had my life over again, I would take the same road because of the hill tops.

To me the most wonderful day of my life was the day I walked out with my first and only baby girl. I was young, and as a girl had little confidence in myself. When I became the mother of (to me) the most wonderful baby in the world, you can imagine my feelings, perhaps. Such preparations, and I remember wondering how my dear mother got out with all of us.

My sister-in-law came with me and offered to carry baby.

I said, "Thanks, I would like you to carry the basket, but I must carry baby." And, with a song in my heart, I did, all the way to town.

To most people, perhaps, my day might not seem very exciting, but to me it is still a wonderful memory.

When our darling was five and a half months old we lost her. That, indeed, was a deep, deep valley. Now I am seven, and have learned that sorrow, however deep, is not all loss or is meant to be. In the deepest valleys of our lives we learn sympathy and understanding.

But, believe me, the day I stepped out with my baby girl I was truly on top of this world.

£10 to Mrs. NAOMI G. ANDERSON, 31 Temple St., Victoria Park, Perth, W.A.

MY mates and I were as usual sitting on the steps of our hut within the wire compound. The Germans had stopped all working parties from going out, so we hadn't work to

THE PRIZES

FIRST PRIZE for the best entry in the contest: Coronation tour for two. The winner and companion will fly to England and U.S. via Qantas/B.O.A.C. and across the Pacific home by B.C.P.A.

Travelling ensemble and afternoon frock by Madame Peller.

Complete nylon lingerie outfit and fashion goods by Prestige.

Wardrobe of 12 pairs of Joyce shoes.

SECOND PRIZE for the second best entry: a specially fitted Ford Consul car.

THIRD PRIZE for the third best entry: a President Model 88 refrigerator.

FOURTH PRIZE of Hoover washing machine, electric polisher, and vacuum cleaner.

THREE PRIZES of £100 for the best entry in each of the three sections other than the entries winning the four major prizes.

THREE PRIZES of a Philips portable radio, each valued at £36/15/-, for the second best entry in each of the three sections.

PROGRESS AWARDS of £10 for entries published during the contest. 25 consolation prizes of £5 each.

came before and after and had a hand in its destiny."

"No, all is changed now. Of Elizabethan England, how little remains. A few market places, the plays of Shakespeare, and the writings of Spenser and Bacon. Little more."

"But you're wrong, believe me. There's so much more. What of the little ships of England that, to their everlasting honor, sailed out against the Spanish Armada, and that 400 years later sailed into Dunkirk and turned a retreat into a thing of glory? Your little ships, England is a part of all that she has been: the triumph, the shame, the good, and the evil. Of Elizabeth Tudor history has written, 'The greatest Queen England has ever known.'"

"And of Elizabeth II, child, what will they write?"

"Who can tell? But I hope 'That with God's help, she served England well.'"

£10 to MRS. B. HOL-LARD, 54 Albion Avenue, Glandore, S.A.

The Queen comes to tea

IF the Queen and her two children came to afternoon tea, I would try to make their visit a very enjoyable one.

I would have the lounge room decorated with large bowls of flowers, and if it was a cold day I would have a blazing log fire; on the other hand, if the weather was hot I would set the tea out in the garden under a large sun-shade.

The first of my three guests would be my mother, who is English, and so naturally she would have a lot in common with the Queen. My second guest would be a dear friend of ours whose father for many years was captain on the late King George V's private yacht. She has met every member of Royalty that has visited Tasmania; and so they would have a lot to discuss about these meetings.

My third guest would be the dear old lady on whose sheep station my husband is employed. She has lived in this midland district all her life, and so could tell the Queen its full history and of its progress.

For the children's enjoyment, I think they would be very interested in looking at the sheep and lambs, and also at the swans and ducks on the lake nearby.

I would arrange the afternoon tea on a low table and on it I would spread a hand-worked Chinese cloth and set out my teaset, which is Royal Doulton and is "Old English Rose" design. There would be a tray of sandwiches, cheese straws, chocolate cake, cream filled and topped with walnuts; fancy iced biscuits; rich fruit cake; tea; and fruit juice or milk for the children.

Before the Queen left, I would give her a bunch of flowers from my own garden.

£10 to Mrs. COLIN FLOOD, "Green Hill," Cambelltown, Tas.

CORONATION CONTEST

December 31, 1952. Attach one coupon to each entry.

I warrant that the accompanying entry is my own original work. I accept the conditions of entry and agree that the judges' decision will be final.

SIGNATURE _____
Mr., Mrs., or Miss _____

ADDRESS _____

State _____

A doctor writes about . . .

Some of my patients

Fear of mother-to-be A bent nose plays up

A WORRIED Roger Ferguson met me at his front gate this morning when I arrived in response to his telephone call.

"I'm anxious about the wife," he told me. "She has a rash. It looks like German measles."

Mrs. Ferguson, who is pregnant, was even more worried than her husband. She obviously had German measles, or rubella, which is the correct medical term.

"What will happen to my baby?" she asked quickly.

"My cousin's little boy is blind. She had German measles before he was born and the doctor said that caused his blindness."

"There's no danger to your child," I assured her.

"You're five months pregnant, which puts you outside the danger period. The risk to an unborn babe arises when the expectant mother suffers from rubella during the first 100 days of pregnancy."

That was all Mrs. Ferguson wanted to know. She relaxed at once.

"Suppose my wife had caught the measles during early pregnancy?" asked Roger Ferguson as we walked to the door. "Could anything have been done to spare the baby?"

"Unfortunately, no," I told him.

"Once the rubella occurs we can do nothing to prevent the risk to the infant. The baby is not always affected, of course, but it happens often enough to cause great concern."

"Any of the child's organs may suffer, but the sight, hearing, and heart seem more prone to damage."

An expectant mother who has been in contact with someone who has afterwards developed rubella should go to her doctor at once for a serum injection.

The best immunity is a natural attack during girlhood. A second bout is rare.

It was not until the severe German measles epidemic of 1940-41 that a Sydney doctor,

Norman McA. Gregg, associated eye and heart conditions in infants with the occurrence of the mild disease in their mothers during pregnancy.

Canada's University of Toronto awarded him a coveted scholarship for his singular contribution to medical science.

A PERSISTENT cold, which blocked his nose and caused a severe headache over his right eye, brought Arthur Young to the surgery last night.

When I examined his nose I could see that the septum—which is the division inside the nose—was deflected to the right side.

"You'll have to have this septum of yours straightened," I said.

"Otherwise, every cold you get will cause discomfort."

"What is the septum?" asked Arthur.

"It's the cartilage dividing the inside of your nose. You should have an equal space on each side of it so that the discharge from your cold can drain.

"Your septum is bent to the right. This blocks most of the space on that side and there isn't enough room for drainage. That's why you have the feeling of congestion and constant headache."

"You must have had an injury to your nose at some time."

"I remember being whacked by a swinging gate when I was at school," recalled Arthur.

"My nose bled all day."

"A swinging gate would have sufficient force behind it to break your nose," I said.

"Because it was not misplaced you didn't realise it was broken. It set itself, but the cartilage was permanently misplaced."

"I'll arrange for you to see an E.N.T. specialist," I told him. "He'll probably fix you up under a local anaesthetic and you should be back at work inside ten days."

All names are fictitious and do not refer to any living person. We regret that our doctor cannot answer inquiries.



"Be gentle, yet firm. Remember, you're dealing with a sensitive, high-strung little stinker."

PATTERN FOR BEGINNERS

F2362—Beginners' pattern for a small girl's sun-dress. Sizes 18in., 20in., 22in., and 27in. length for 2, 4, 6, and 8 years. Requires 1½ yds. 36in. plain material and 1yd. 36in. spotted material. Special price, 2/-.

Fashion PATTERNS

F2357



F2358



F2359



F2357.—Cool, sleeveless one-piece with matching short-cut bolero. Sizes 32 to 38in. bust. Requires 1½ yds. 36in. material and 3yds. bias binding. Price, 3/-.

F2358.—Spectator sports dress. Sizes 32 to 38in. bust. Requires 5½ yds. 36in. material. Price, 3/-.

F2359.—A smartly styled three-piece sports ensemble includes separate shorts, blouse, and button-down skirt. Sizes 26 to 32in. waist for shorts and skirt; 32 to 38in. bust for blouse. Requires 2½ yds. 36in. material for blouse; 1½ yds. 36in. material for shorts; 3½ yds. 36in. material for skirt, plus 3yds. contrasting braid trim. Price complete, 4/-.

F2360.—Tailored one-piece swimsuit. Sizes 32 to 38in. bust. Requires 2½ yds. 36in. material and 1yd. 36in. contrast braid. Price, 3/-.

F2361.—Boxy-type beach coat. Sizes 32 to 38in. bust. Requires 3½ yds. 36in. material and 4yds. 36in. contrast braid. Price, 3/-.

F2360



NEEDLEWORK NOTIONS

No. 362—SKIRT

An attractively styled three-tiered striped cotton skirt obtainable cut out ready to make. The material is "Bonnie Prince" herringbone. The color choice includes red and white, green and white, yellow and white, blue and white, and pink and white.

Sizes 24in., 26in., 28in., and 30in. waist measurement, 27/11. Postage and registration, 1/8 extra.

No. 363—SUN-DRESS

A pretty sun-dress obtainable cut out ready to make. The material is summer breeze cotton, and is obtainable in powder-blue, lime-green, cherry, yellow, mid-brown, and grey, all printed with a white coin-spot.

Sizes 32 and 34in. bust, 37/6; 36 and 38in. bust, 39/3. Postage and registration, 2/9 extra.

362



363



F2361



F2362

No. 364.—THREE FEEDERS

The feeders are clearly traced ready to embroider on British cloth. The color choice includes pink, blue, green, lemon, and white. The contrasting bias binding finish is not supplied.

Size, 8in. by 11in. Price, 2/3 each. Postage, 3d. extra. Set of three, 6/-. Postage, 9d. extra.

No. 365.—THREE TEA-TOWELS

The tea-towels are obtainable clearly traced ready to embroider in strong cotton with a linen finish with blue border or a multi-colored border of red, green, yellow, and blue. Size, 22in. by 32in. Price, 6/11 each. Postage, 8d. extra. Set of three, 20/3. Postage and registration, 2/- extra.

NOTE: Please make a second color choice. No C.O.D. orders accepted. All Needlework Notions over 6/11 sent by registered post.

Worth Reporting

MELBOURNE hire-car driver Charles Meadows, who has taken more brides to the altar than he can remember, told us he can always detect the beginnings of a hen-pecked husband when he is driving the just-wed couple from church to reception.

The groom is picked to pieces by his bride at once and reminded of all the little mistakes he made during the ceremony," Mr. Meadows explained.

"Most brides are genuinely nervous on their way to church. They perch on the edge of the seat and are often as bad as children going to the dentist."

"It seems a woman's whole lifetime rushes through her mind during the drive and she often unwinds by telling the driver her story."

Grooms were just as worried at the last minute, Mr. Meadows added.

"One very nervous groom got me to go ahead and tell his bride he was on his way but he just needed a few more minutes to himself while he calmed down," he said.

Mr. Meadows finds that the car radio is a good distraction, and he always tries to tune in to music appropriate to the occasion.

"One day we cleared the traffic by switching on the song 'Don't Fence Me In' at full blast when wedding guests were nearly suffocating the newlywed couple as they tried to get into the car," he said.

Even Trotters settle here

YOUNGEST of the "Trotter Eleven," a British migrant family recently arrived in Melbourne, observed on first introduction to Australia, "The writing's the same here, Dad, but the talking's awfully different."

Mr. and Mrs. John Trotter, who are settling in Sunshine, Victoria, with their eight daughters and one son, come from Slough, near Windsor Castle.

Being 11 strong and refusing to break up, the family has waited since 1946 for the chance to settle here.

Now they are living in a small community of Slough people, all of whom were neighbors before they came here in the past six years.

The only things the Trotters are missing are their television set and their White Christmas.



"If you like money, you'll like the Acme Loan Company's money. They give you genuine, crisp, fresh-from-the-Federal-Treasury pounds, manufactured under strict government supervision..."

From telegrams to juggling

FOUR years ago, Paula Coutts, a telegram girl at Kogarah Post Office, Sydney, gave up her job and went to England. Now, at 22 years of age, she is well-established there as a juggler.

Women jugglers seem to be pretty rare, and Paula's father, Mr. Arthur Coutts, of Carlton, Sydney, told us modestly that he thought Paula was the worst of the lot.

"But she has the personality," he added.

Mr. Coutts is a hand-balancer, and he and Paula had a double act in this line before he taught her juggling.

Paula's personality certainly impressed film star Gene Kelly, who was looking for a juggler to take part in the circus ballet sequence in "Invitation to the Dance," the film he is making in England.

"He wanted a boy juggler," Mr. Coutts said, "but, after seeing Paula's act, gave her the part on the spot."

She is dressed as a clown in the film, and juggles clubs and does some hand-balancing.

Paula has appeared in shows in England with Lena Horne, Sophie Tucker, and Gipsy Rose Lee. She has also been in the floor-show at the Savoy Hotel, London, and juggled before Princess Margaret, who called in there one night.

ONE of our 19-year-old friends was entertaining some girls the other day when her 12-year-old brother came in with a book he was reading.

"What's 'sophisticated'?" he asked.

Sister preened herself a little and smiled. "I'm sophisticated," she said.

"Oh, I see," said the small boy. "Cranky."

LONDON TALK

By Michael Plant

THE new flat for Princess Margaret in Clarence House is almost ready.

Her suite — once nurseries for Prince Charles and Princess Anne — is completely self-contained, with an automatic lift going directly from her front door to the side entrance of the house.

Into her new flat will go her large collection of jazz records, her modern novels and French poetry, and her piano, at which she spends so much time.

The Princess is looking forward to doing some informal entertaining there, inviting friends to sherry before the theatre, or for an evening's impromptu musical entertainment.

★ ★ ★

MAKING a bid for the big time in the world of haute couture are two Australian girls, Margaret Kerr and Starr Liddell, who recently showed their new collection at the Stork Club.

They had the original idea of calling several dresses by aboriginal names.

My fancy was particularly caught by a backless ballgown called "Boggabri." Another eye-catcher was a slinky black tube called "Witchetty."

★ ★ ★

SHARMAN DOUGLAS, daughter of the former United States Ambassador to London and a close friend of Princess Margaret, is a busy girl these days.

She is a car saleswoman in Hollywood, but the cars aren't the usual kind. They are British saloons lined with pink.

Specially designed slipcovers fit over the seats and drape luxuriously over the passengers' shoulders so that, from the outside, they look as if they're wearing fur coats.

Sharmen's slogan is "These cars are minkomparable with any on the market!"

★ ★ ★

WHILE he was filming a battle sequence for "Single Handed," I heard director Blythe Hill call for the makeup man: "Perspiration for the officers and sweat for the men!"

★ ★ ★

AN affectionately noisy audience bade farewell to petite ballerina Sally Gilmour after her performance at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith, the other night.

She has been dancing with the Ballet Rambert, with which she made such a triumphal tour of Australia a couple of years back.

Now Sally is giving up the adoration of London audiences to settle quietly in Melbourne with her husband, Dr. Allan Wynn.

DRESS SENSE by Betty Kepp

Beige-sand and caramel are the newest and most chic midsummer colors.

THE best colors to point up beige are red, black, and white — or a good sun-tan.

Consider the precise look of a coat-dress, buttoned in jet, worn with black patent leather sandals and matching bag. The hat is a white cartwheel.

Or think about a one-piece with a waist wrapped in front and buttoned at back. There is no better way to flatter a mid-sector.

The material is pure silk, the color deep caramel, worn with red shoes and hat. Handbag and gloves are white.

For after five, pale pinks, right down to raspberry, are summer's newest. Black and pink are also worn together for flattery.

As an example, a skirt of pale rose nylon tulle over matching taffeta, worn with a black elastic waist-cincher and a bare bodice-top in black lace.

For a more covered look, a raspberry-pink blouse can replace the black lace top. The blouse buttons in jet and ties softly at a high neckline finished with a pointed scarf.

The sleeves are long, with a batwing silhouette.

In a fashion era of prints, colors are full of character, such as brown and black or dark blue and dark green.

Designs are impressionistic, blotted out and blurred. Patterned prints often mass and merge to hide the actual background.

Then there are the floral prints in flower-garden colors — begonia, azalea, hydrangea, rose, and a wonderful green, the color of English lawns.

With a printed ensemble, one color for accessories looks best. It can be a predominating color in the print, or all black or all white.

If the budget can't stretch to a new party dress, color can



D.S. 19.—Dress and bolero ensemble in sizes 32in. to 38in. bust. Requires 3½ yds. 36in. printed material and 2yds. 36in. plain material. Price 3/6. Patterns may be obtained from Mrs. Betty Kepp, "Dress Sense," Box 4088, G.P.O., Sydney.

do wonders towards resurrecting one from last season's wardrobe or that of the season before.

Faded colors can be dyed to one of the lovely summer candy shades or to black.

A tie-on overskirt of net is a marvellous way to disguise repairs. It also adds softness, new color, and a graceful line to the most ordinary silhouette.

Jackets are all shapes.

Perhaps the newest is a triangular spencer. One is illustrated with the dress and jacket ensemble above.

Another re-styling idea for party dresses is to chop off a bodice-top finished with sleeves just above the bust-line (light boning at the seams will make it stay put), and add an enormous stole in

a soft, diaphanous material. As the hot weather changes to autumn, a jacket to contrast in color and material to a dress is a rejuvenating accessory for a tired summer wardrobe.

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Dona

Marise

Fashion FROCKS

Ready to wear or cut out ready to make

FRONA — A one-piece dress attractively highlighted with white accents. The material is printed cotton. The color choice includes red and white, green and white, brown and white, blue and white.

Ready To Wear: Sizes 22 and 24in. bust, 63 ½ to 36 and 38in. bust, 65 ½.

Cut Out Only: Sizes 22 and 24in. bust, 44 ½ to 38 and 38in. bust, 46 ½.

MARISE — A one-piece day dress designed with Gibson Girl sleeves and a flared skirt. The material is printed cotton. The color choice includes white, pale yellow, black, green, mauve, black, saxe-blue, pale blue, black, green, lime, black, tangerine, gold, black, burnt orange, black, all printed on a white ground.

Ready To Wear: Sizes 22 and 24in. bust, 79 ½ to 36 and 38in. bust, 82 ½.

Cut Out Only: Sizes 22 and 24in. bust, 57 ½ to 36 and 38in. bust, 59 ½.

* NOTE: Please make a second order. Check No C.O.D. orders accepted. Orders must be sent to address given on page 38. Frock may be inspected or obtained immediately at Fashion Frock, Standard's Building, 21 Pier Street, Sydney.



"Bagwell's going nuts . . . taking inventory!"

The ten best films of the past year

Potential stars emerge in lively movie year

By M. J. McMAHON

An interesting film year like 1952 complicates the task of choosing the ten most enjoyable and worthwhile pictures of the twelve months.

WITHOUT attempting to arrange them in order of merit, here is my list of the ten best films of 1952:

"The River," "La Ronde," "Detective Story," "Place in the Sun," "High Noon," "Bright Victory," "The Marrying Kind," "The Sound Barrier," "The African Queen," "Singin' in the Rain."

Several newcomers who look like promising star material appeared in some of these big films.

Taken in the order given, "The River" is the classic entry, and wonderfully atmospheric.

Shot wholly in India by ace French director Jean Renoir from a novel by Rumer Godden, and with her collaboration, the sensitive, touching picture about young people growing up in the country evolves from an episodic script.

The Continental film "La Ronde," an unabashed trifle about worldly seduction, may not be everybody's cup of tea, but it is the best that Europe has sent us yet in the uninhibited school of entertainment.

People who did like it were delighted by the wry touch that director Max Ophuls brought to the artificiality of the Viennese comedy. And all the time there is that delightful Strauss waltz circling through the Round of Love.

Saturnine in mood, "Detective Story" is set in an American night police court and deals forcefully — sometimes brutally — with people and human relationships.

Foolish modification of the original stageplay weakens the point of the story, but with stars Kirk Douglas and Eleanor Parker and a quartet of exceptional players from Broadway, director William Wyler made a movie that is quick with drama excepting for that phony climax.

With a brilliant cast and a cleverly modernised screenplay based on Theodore

Dreiser's marathon "An American Tragedy," Hollywood made "A Place in the Sun" one of the season's most haunting dramas.

Stanley Kramer's superior Western, "High Noon," is something of a hybrid growth in a field where certain basic patterns persist over the years.

Neither star-studded nor tinted in sweeping technicolor, "High Noon" is set in a sun-scorched town in the old West, and it manages to be unusual while sticking to a conventional plot.

A good musical score sustains an atmosphere of foreboding.

A World War II film with special merit, "Bright Victory" gives an intelligent, documentary-like account of the rehabilitation of a blind American war veteran, and probes into his human relationships with warm insight.

Robust comedienne Judy Holliday treads a rocky matrimonial road with newcomer Aldo Ray in the Ruth Gordon-Garrison Kanin comedy-drama "The Marrying Kind."

Some noisy patches of drama weaken the comedy mood of the film.

From the jungles of the Belgian Congo and Uganda comes John Huston's realistic version of the C. S. Forester World War I adventure, "The African Queen," which has been released in some Australian States.

Rugged realism is the keynote of this disarming adventure, which stars Katharine Hepburn, Humphrey Bogart, and the little river steamer of the film's title, which conveys them on a too-long trip down river to blow up a German gunboat.

"The Sound Barrier," Britain's topical drama of jet-propelled aircraft, is a fascinating and exciting piece of filimcraft.

Gene Kelly's "Singin' in the Rain" ousts his Academy Award winner "An American



MONTGOMERY CLIFT and Elizabeth Taylor (above) as the boy from the wrong side of the tracks and the wealthy girl with whom he is absurdly in love in "A Place in the Sun," one of the best films of 1952.

in Paris" as the best musical of the year.

I chose "Singin' in the Rain" (which has about everything you could ask for in a musical) for the spirit of real gaiety that it projects.

More DeMille

ANOTHER movie to be considered is Cecil B. DeMille's "Greatest Show On Earth," a big, brassy circus spectacle to delight kids from six to 60.

Best biographical musical is "With a Song in My Heart," a film of technicolored opulence with a sob in the throat, with Susan Hayward playing the role of singer Jane Froman and Jane providing a generous programme of popular ballads and wartime songs.

As for war films, I plump for "The Desert Fox."

"Scarborough" has claims to merit as the most elegant costume romance of the 12 months.

For Australians the year's monumental disappointment is "Kangaroo," the bushland drama filmed in South Australia by Hollywood:

As the best actors of the year I nominate Gregory Peck in "David and Bathsheba," Raimu in "Fanny," Fredric March in "Death of a Salesman," Marlon Brando in "Streetcar Named Desire," Jose Ferrer in "Cyrano de Bergerac," Nigel Patrick as Mr. Knowall in "Trio," and Alec Guinness in "The Lavender Hill Mob."

Star spotting brings a sporting flavor to movie stocktaking.

Movie men who look to be candidates for top ranks are Alex Nicol, Dale Robertson, and John Justin.

Nicol, who is a recruit from Broadway, is a first-class actor and has virile good looks.

Although he hasn't yet shown himself to be any great shakes as an actor, Dale Robertson is a handsome fellow with tons of quiet charm.

John Justin plays the successful test pilot in "The Sound Barrier" and is a striking British screen newcomer.

Starlet Janice Rule is a charming youngster who appears to have the plus quality of an actress in the making.



SIR RALPH RICHARDSON (left) with screen daughter Ann Todd and son-in-law Nigel Patrick in a scene from "The Sound Barrier," David Lean's distinguished aviation drama.



HUMPHREY BOGART and Katharine Hepburn, looking much the worse for their enterprise, hack their way through jungle waters in this sequence of "The African Queen." John Huston's fascinating adventure of World War I.



JUDY HOLLIDAY and Aldo Ray, making his screen debut, co-star in the domestic comedy "The Marrying Kind," which is among the best-of-the-year films.



KIRK DOUGLAS, a sadistic policeman, with Eleanor Parker, who plays his once-errant wife in the dramatic police-court drama "Detective Story."



ARTHUR KENNEDY and Peggy Dow in "Bright Victory," an intelligent and moving story about rehabilitating a blind American war veteran.



HUMPHREY BOGART and Katharine Hepburn, looking much the worse for their enterprise, hack their way through jungle waters in this sequence of "The African Queen." John Huston's fascinating adventure of World War I.



Musical fantasy

• "The 5000 Fingers of Dr. T." is a technicolor musical extravaganza from Columbia depicting day-dreams of 9-year-old Bart Collins (Tommy Rettig), who hates piano practice. One day Bart nods off to sleep at the keyboard and begins a dream-world duel with a piano teacher named Dr. Terwilliker.



DR. TERWILLIKER (Hans Conried), above, greets Bart's mother (Mary Healy). In Bart's dream his mother is under Terwilliker's hypnotic spell.

FORLORN BART (Tommy Rettig), right, is escorted by Dr. Terwilliker (Hans Conried) to the keyboard of a giant piano which curves out of sight.



TERRIBLE TWINS of Dr. Terwilliker (above) are joined by a Siamese beard. The twins scare Bart with a fantastic skating routine.

HENCHMEN gather around Dr. T. (right), whose ambition in this musical is to conduct 500 little boys in a giant piano symphony.



WORLD WAR II AIR DRAMA



1 **WORRY** is always present in the life of Lucey Tibbets (Eleanor Parker), whose husband, Colonel Paul Tibbets (Robert Taylor), is a pilot testing new long-range bomber B-29, which proves a success.



2 **GENERAL ROBERTS** (Robert Burton), right, tells Paul of big new assignment. He has been chosen to train personnel for a new-type bomb attack on the enemy. For security reasons, secrecy is essential.



3 **EXPERIMENTAL** atomic bomb is studied by Paul and scientists. Paul begins assembling crews from veteran fliers, who are transferred to an isolated air base. A few with loose tongues are weeded out.



4 **ANXIOUS** for news of Paul, Lucey seeks word from security officer Uanna (James Whitmore) without success.



5 **TENSION** tells on Paul and Lucey after family is allowed to join him. Lucey tries to be understanding, but he decides to send her home.



6 **SYMPATHETIC** General Brent (Larry Keating), left, gives Paul the O.K. to leave. Paul prefers to fly without armed escort to target.



7 **CREW** of Paul's B-29 are told for the first time the type of bomb they carry. On an August morning in 1945, at exactly 9.15, Hiroshima becomes a desolate waste, the site of the first atomic bomb explosion.

CITY FILM GUIDE

Films reviewed

CAPITOL.—Morning and matinee sessions: "Mother Goose" pantomime, with Maggie Fitzgibbon, Dawn Lake. Evening sessions only: "The Brave Warrior," technicolor Western, starring Jon Hall, Christine Larson. Plus "The Return of Monte Cristo." (Re-release.)

CENTURY.—★★ "The Holly and the Ivy," drama, starring Sir Ralph Richardson, Celia Johnson. Plus "Mr. Peck-a-boo," comedy, starring Bourvil.

LIBERTY.—★★ "Quo Vadis?" technicolor drama of early Rome, starring Robert Taylor, Deborah Kerr, Leo Genn.

LYCEUM.—★★ "The Importance of Being Earnest," British technicolor comedy, starring Michael Redgrave, Joan Greenwood, Michael Denison, Dorothy Tutin. Plus ★ "Assassin For Hire," thriller, starring Ronald Howard.

LYRIC.—★ "The Brigand," technicolor melodrama, starring Anthony Dexter, Jody Lawrence. Plus "A Yank in Indo-China." (Both re-releases.)

PALACE.—"Jack and the Beanstalk," cinecolor pantomime, starring Abbott and Costello. Plus features. (Evening sessions only: ★ "The Girl From Jones Beach," comedy, starring Virginia Mayo, Ronald Reagan. Re-release.)

PLAZA.—★ "Story of Robin Hood," technicolor adventure, starring Richard Todd, Joan Rice, Peter Finch. Plus "The Olympic Elk," technicolor documentary film.

PRINCE EDWARD.—★★ "The Greatest Show On Earth," technicolor circus drama, starring Betty Hutton, Cornel Wilde, Charlton Heston. Plus features.

REGENT.—★★ "Snows of Kilimanjaro," technicolor drama,

starring Gregory Peck, Ava Gardner, Susan Hayward, Hildegarde Neff. Plus features.

SAVOY.—★★ "Pagliacci," Italian film opera, starring Tito Gobbi, Gina Lollobrigida, Alfio Poli. Plus "Montmartre." (Re-release.)

STATE.—★★ "The Man in the White Suit," British comedy, starring Alec Guinness, Joan Greenwood, Celia Parker. Plus "13 East Street," thriller, starring Patrick Holt.

ST. JAMES.—★★ "Because You're Mine," technicolor musical comedy, starring Mario Lanza, Doretta Morrow, James Whitmore. (See review this page.) Plus features.

VARIETY.—★★ "Going My Way," comedy-drama, starring Bing Crosby. (Re-release.) Plus features.

VICTORY.—★ "Untamed Frontier," technicolor Western, starring Joseph Cotten, Shelley Winters, Scott Brady. Plus ★ "Lost In Alaska," comedy, starring Abbott and Costello.

Films not yet reviewed

CIVIC.—"Strange World," jungle adventure, starring Alexander Carlos, Angelica Hauff. Plus "The Kansan," Western, starring Richard Dix, Jane Wyatt. (Re-release.)

EMBASSY.—"Laughter In Paradise," British comedy, starring Alastair Sim, Fay Compton. Plus features.

ESQUIRE.—"Something for the Birds," comedy, starring Patricia Neal, Victor Mature. Plus "Backlash," thriller, starring Richard Travis. (Re-release.)

MAYFAIR.—"On Moonlight Bay," technicolor musical, starring Doris Day, Gordon MacRae. Plus features.

PARK.—"Fort Worth," technicolor Western, starring Randolph Scott, Phyllis Thaxter. Plus "Confidence Girl."

rated musician whose pretty sister, Bridget (Doretta Morrow), has vocal aspirations.

Renaldo and Bridget swoon through duets, then the romance falls apart over Paula Corday. The lovers are reunited in an all-song finale.

James Whitmore and his girlfriend, Jeff Donnell, impart some fun to proceedings. Newcomer Doretta Morrow is a striking Brunette with a pleasant singing voice.

In Sydney—St. James.

★★ Because You're Mine

Y

OU will see a streamlined Mario Lanza in Metro's new technicolor musical "Because You're Mine."

This is the picture that caused so much muttering and head shaking when it was selected for the Royal Command Film performance a few months ago.

As is customary in such

Talking of Films

By M. J. McMAHON

Operatic idol Renaldo Rosario (Mario Lanza) is drafted into the U.S. Army. In camp, starry colonels, at least one general, and tough Sergeant Batterson (James Whitmore) go to embarrassing lengths to keep the distinguished recruit happy.

Sergeant Batterson is a frus-



8 **BROADCAST** describing Paul's mission and the prominent part he took is heard by Lucey and friend Marge (Marilyn Erskine). The fears of the past are forgotten as Lucey realises that Paul will be home soon.

Happy New Year

By Our Food and Cookery Experts

Frosty fruit drinks, served in sugar-rimmed cocktail glasses or tall glasses tinkling with crushed ice, are just the thing to give a festive air to your New Year party.

FLAVOR and sweetening for fruit drinks should be added sparingly and the concoction tasted before serving. The quantity of both flavoring and sweetening needed depends to a great extent on personal taste, but too much of either will spoil the drink.

For the hostess who likes to serve a hot casserole-type dish for supper, in addition to the usual savories, sandwiches, and cocktail-stick titbits, the recipes on this page include a variety of foods ideal for buffet service.

All spoon measurements are level.

FRUIT PUNCH

Half cup water, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup strong tea, $\frac{1}{2}$ pint soda water, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup raspberry syrup, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup lemon juice, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup crushed pineapple, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup maraschino cherries, iced water, ice blocks, strawberries.

Boil water and sugar together for 5 minutes. Add tea, raspberry syrup, lemon juice, and pineapple. Stand 30 minutes. Add iced water to make 3 pints. Add cherries and $\frac{1}{2}$ pint iced water. Serve with crushed ice and sliced strawberries.

FROSTED COCKTAIL

Half cup sugar, 2-3/4 cups water, 2-3/4 cups pineapple juice, 2-3/4 cups lemon juice, 2 unbeaten egg-whites, 3 cups finely crushed ice.

Shake all ingredients vigorously in large screw-top jar until very light and frothy. Serve in cocktail glasses with frosted rims.

To frost rims of glasses: Hold glass by base or stem and dip rim in very slightly beaten egg-white, then into a small quantity of colored sugar in a saucer. Stand aside until quite dry and set. It is a good idea to frost rims of glasses early in the day for an evening party.

To color sugar: Place one or two tablespoons sugar into a cup, add one or two drops of food coloring and stir with a teaspoon until sugar is evenly colored.

THIRST QUENCHER

One cup orange juice, 1 cup pineapple juice, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup lemon juice, 2 dessertspoons honey, $\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 cups ginger ale.

Mix fruit juices and honey thoroughly, chill. Just before serving add ginger ale and serve in tall glasses with a thin slice of lemon or orange on the edge.

AMERICAN LEMONADE

(To be made in individual glasses and served immediately.)

Place 1 tablespoon of castor sugar and the strained juice of a lemon into a large tumbler with a wineglass of water and half fill the glass with

finely crushed ice. Add 1 dessert-spoon of strawberry syrup and fill up with soda water. Drop a thin slice of orange or lemon on top and serve with a straw.

CHERRY SLING

Half pound ripe, sweet cherries, 2oz. castor sugar, 1 pint boiling water, 2 tablespoons brandy, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon almond essence.

Remove stems from cherries, wash thoroughly and allow to drain well. Squash or mash with a fork or potato masher in a bowl, add sugar. Pour boiling water over, cover, and stand 6 hours. Strain, add brandy and almond essence, chill thoroughly. Serve in small glasses with sugar-frosted rims. Hang a small cluster of cherries on the side.

ICED BRAZILIAN CHOCOLATE

Two tablespoons cocoa, 1 pint hot milk, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar, $\frac{1}{2}$ pint strong black coffee, whipped cream or iced cream.

Blend cocoa with a little water, add gradually to hot milk. Stir in sugar and freshly made and strained black coffee. Allow to become quite cold, chill thoroughly and serve in glasses topped with a spoonful of whipped cream or a scoop of ice-cream.

MINT JULEP ICED TEA

Four cups freshly brewed tea, 7 or 8 sprigs fresh, young mint, juice of 4 lemons, juice of 2 oranges, 6 cloves, 1/2 cups sugar, 2 pints grape or apple juice, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup diced or crushed pineapple, few cherries, 2 quarts water, crushed ice.

Add mint, lemon and orange juice, cloves, and sugar to the tea. Chill thoroughly. When ready to serve add chilled grape or apple juice, pineapple, cherries, and water. Pour over crushed ice in glasses, decorate glasses with thinly sliced orange.

SUMMER PUNCH

Two lemons, 1 orange, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar, 1 cup water, 1 tin grapefruit juice, 1 tin pineapple juice, 1 pint soda water or lemonade, crushed ice.

Slice lemons and orange thinly, add sugar and water, heat almost to boiling, mashing fruit well. Cool and strain. Add pineapple and grapefruit juice. Chill well, dilute before serving with soda water or lemonade. Garnish with a sprig of mint and crushed ice.

APRICOT NECTAR

Three cups sweetened apricot juice, 1 cup orange juice, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup lemon juice, 3 cups iced water, cherries and mint to garnish.

Strain apricot syrup from stewed apricots. Add orange and lemon juice and dilute with iced water. Serve chilled with garnish of fresh mint leaves and fresh or candied cherries.



HOT DISHES FOR PARTIES

SEAFOOD CASSEROLE

Two tablespoons butter or substitute, 3 tablespoons flour, 2 1/2 cups milk, 1 small tin whitebait, 1 small tin fish cutlets, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. shelled prawns, lemon juice, salt and cayenne pepper to taste, 1 tablespoon chopped parboiled red pepper, lemon wedges and parsley to garnish.

Melt butter, add flour, cook 2 or 3 minutes without browning. Stir in milk, continue stirring until boiling. Add whitebait, fish (drained, flaked, and dark skin removed), and shelled prawns. Season to taste with lemon juice, salt, and cayenne pepper. Fold in chopped red pepper. Turn into casserole, keep hot in oven without allowing to boil. Serve garnished with lemon wedges and parsley. For five.

CASSEROLE OF MOCK CHICKEN WITH MUSHROOMS

Two medium-sized rabbits (or 3 small rabbits), thin piece lemon rind, 1 medium onion, salt, 2 tins mushroom soup (16oz. size), 4 tablespoons flour, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup milk, 1 tablespoon butter, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup soft breadcrumbs, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. fresh mushrooms, cayenne pepper and salt to taste.

Soak rabbits 1 hour in salted water, wash well, remove tail joints, and cut into pieces. Drop into boiling water with salt, lemon rind, and sliced onion. Simmer 1 1/2 hours or until tender, or pressure cook. When cold, cut all meat from bones. Place mushroom soup in a saucepan, stir

in flour blended with milk, continue stirring until boiling. Add butter, simmer 2 or 3 minutes. Fold in sauteed mushrooms (peeled and chopped), diced rabbit meat, and bacon or ham. Season with cayenne and extra salt if necessary. Turn into casserole, top with breadcrumbs, dot generously with butter or substitute, and bake in moderate oven until thoroughly heated and browned on top. For 10 to 12.

DEVILLED CHEESE TOAST

Four slices white bread, 4 dessert-spoons mixed mustard, 4 slices bacon, $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ cup burgundy or claret, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. cheese.

Spread bread with mustard, place on oven-tray and brown lightly in oven. Take out, sprinkle bread slices with burgundy or claret until all is used. Cover with slices of cheese cut $\frac{1}{4}$ in. thick. Remove rind from bacon, cut each slice in halves and place 2 pieces on each square of bread. Return to oven until cheese is melted and bacon cooked.

SAVORY CORN AND TOMATO

One large white onion, 1 tablespoon butter or substitute, 3 medium-sized tomatoes, salt, pinch cayenne pepper, 3 rashers chopped cooked bacon (or 2 oz. chopped ham), 1 medium-sized tin sweet corn, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cooked peas, 1 cup soft breadcrumbs, parsley.

Peel and chop onion, brown lightly in hot butter or substitute. Add roughly chopped tomatoes, skins removed. (This is easily done by immersing tomatoes for a minute in boiling water, then peeling skin off quickly.) Flavor with salt and cayenne, add bacon and simmer until tomatoes are very soft and

onion tender. Fold in corn, peas, and breadcrumbs, reserving some for topping. Turn into casserole, top with remaining breadcrumbs, dot generously with butter or substitute. Bake in moderate oven until top is lightly browned. Serve hot, garnished with parsley. For 4 or 5.

MACARONI CHEESE CROQUETTES

Two ounces macaroni, 1 tablespoon butter or substitute, 1 1/2 tablespoons flour, $\frac{1}{2}$ pint milk, salt and cayenne pepper, 1 teaspoon mustard, 1 teaspoon grated onion, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup grated cheese, 2oz. chopped ham or 2 or 3 rashers chopped cooked bacon, 1 dessertspoon chopped parsley, flour, egg glazing, browned crumbs for covering, fat for frying.

Cook well-washed macaroni in a large quantity of boiling salted water until quite tender. Drain thoroughly. Melt butter or substitute, add flour, cook 2 or 3 minutes without browning. Stir in milk, salt, cayenne pepper, mustard, and onion. Continue stirring until boiling. Fold in cheese, ham or bacon, parsley, and macaroni. Turn on to flat plate to become cold and thick. Take a tablespoonful at a time and shape into croquettes on a lightly floured board, using a little flour for shaping. Dip in egg glazing, drain, toss in breadcrumbs. Allow to stand a while, dip again in egg glazing and toss again in crumbs. Deep fry golden-brown in fuming fat. Keep hot.

Variety in this week's prize recipes

Cold meat dish with mayonnaise flavor ideal for holiday meals

Tongue and gherkin ring made from cooked tongues mixed with pickled gherkins and set in a mayonnaise-type cream sauce wins the main prize in our recipe contest this week.

CHOPPED cold meat, such as ham, chicken, veal, beef, pumped leg of lamb (prepared as mock ham), or pork mixed with veal or chicken, may be used instead of tongues.

The addition of mustard, vinegar, and egg to the white sauce in which the meat is jelled gives it a mayonnaise flavor which is very piquant and appetising, especially when the ring is served with salad.

A recipe for braised sweetbreads and bacon wins a consolation prize. Other prize-

winning recipes this week are for sherry cream pie, which is rather expensive but ideal for a special occasion, and for golden peach whip.

All spoon measurements are level.

TONGUE AND GHERKIN RING

Four salted lamb's tongues, 4 pickled gherkins, good 4 pint hot water, 2½ dessertspoons gelatine, 1 egg-yolk, 1 dessertspoon sugar, 1 teaspoon salt, ½ teaspoon dry mustard, pinch pepper, ½ cup white vinegar, 1 tablespoon butter or other shortening, 1 tablespoon flour, ½ pint milk.

Cook tongues gently 2½ to 3 hours or until tender, or pressure-cook. Skin while hot, cool, chop into cubes. Slice gherkins, add to meat. Dissolve gelatine in hot water, cool. Beat egg-yolk with sugar, salt, mustard, and pepper, add vinegar, mix well. Melt butter, add flour, stir until smooth. Cook 2 or 3 minutes without browning. Add milk, stir until boiling. Gradually add egg-yolk mixture, mix well. Cool, add dissolved gelatine, meat, and gherkins. When quite cold and beginning to thicken, fill into wetted tin, ring-tin. Chill until set. Unmould, serve in wedges with crisp salad.

First Prize of £5 to Mrs. E. Plowman, 12 Belgrave St., Hawthorn F2, Vic.

BRAISED SWEETBREADS AND BACON

One pound sweetbreads, 2 sticks celery, ½ medium carrot, 1 tomato, 1 pint stock, salt, pepper, 3 rashers bacon, 1 tablespoon butter or substitute, 2 tablespoons flour, 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce.

Wash sweetbreads, soak in cold water 1 hour. Cover with cold water, bring to boil, drain. Cook 20 minutes in boiling water, drop into cold water, drain. Remove skin.

tubes, and membrane. Place in saucepan on top of chopped carrots, celery, and tomato (skin removed). Cover with bacon rashers (rind removed).

Add stock, salt and pepper, simmer gently 1 hour. Cook butter and flour 2 or 3 minutes without browning, add sauce and strained stock. Brown sweetbreads under grill, serve with vegetables, pouring sauce over and around. A little gravy coloring may be added to sauce if desired.

Consolation Prize of £1 to Mrs. F. I. Penfold, Holdsworth Rd., Bendigo, Vic.

SHERRY CREAM PIE

One and a half cups crushed crisp chocolate biscuits, 4oz. melted butter.

Filling: Two dessertspoons gelatine softened in 3 dessertspoons milk, 2 eggs, 1-3rd cup sugar, 2-3ds cup milk, pinch salt, pinch nutmeg, ½ teaspoon grated lemon rind, 1-3rd cup sherry, ½ pint cream or cream substitute, grated chocolate.

Add melted butter to crushed biscuits, mix well. Press firmly into a 9in. tart-plate, pressing up sides and on edge of plate. Chill 1 hour.

Beat egg-yolks with sugar. Add milk and stir over boiling water until mixture coats a silver spoon. Add salt, nutmeg, lemon rind, and softened gelatine. Stir until gelatine is dissolved. Gradually add sherry, mixing well. Chill until beginning to thicken. Fold in stiffly beaten egg-whites, then whipped cream. Fill into tart-case, top with grated chocolate, and chill 6 to 8 hours or as long as possible.

Consolation Prize of £1 to Mrs. N. Grundy, Garrick St., Coolangatta, Qld.

GOLDEN PEACH WHIP

Two packets orange jelly, ½ pint hot water, ½ pint cold custard, ½ pint syrup from cooked or tinned peaches, 1 cup peach pulp, extra peaches, sliced or halved.

Dissolve jelly in hot water, cool. When beginning to thicken, add peach syrup and whip until light and frothy. Fold in peach puree and custard. Fill into wetted mould, chill. Serve with extra sliced or halved peaches and cream or ice-cream.

Consolation Prize of £1 to Mrs. N. Blight, 30 Curedale St., Beaconsfield, Fremantle, W.A.

MOTHERCRAFT BUREAU

OUR Mothercraft Service

Bureau at 149 Castle-reech Street, Sydney, will be closed until Tuesday, February 3, as Sister Mary Jacob will be on annual leave.

The Bureau will reopen for free advisory and pamphlet service on that date.

HOUSEHOLD HINTS

USE moderate temperatures always when stewing, boiling, or baking, and thus avoid shrinkage, waste, and loss of flavor.

WHEN grilling meat, have glowing-hot griller bars so that the meat cooks quickly. Grilling cuts are expensive, and it is important that food value be conserved.

MAKE the best use of your refrigerator. Keep it clean inside and out. Avoid strong-smelling soaps when cleaning. Deodorising packs are available which may be used to good advantage.

WHEN making pastry for savory pies, roll balance thinly, brush with milk, sprinkle with cheese and celery salt. Cut into squares, bake in hot oven 8 to 10 minutes. Store in airtight tin for use as an emergency biscuit.

USE up left-over cold poultry, meat, or ham by combining with an equal quantity of macaroni and white sauce. Flavor with grated cheese, onion, salt, and pepper, and fill into ovenware dish. Top with breadcrumbs and nob of butter and reheat in oven.

WEARY, DREARY PEOPLE

Put Some GO Into Your Life

Too many men, women and girls suffer aches, pains, headaches, and faintly tired, tired, tired. The cause? Very often, anaemia or bloodlessness.

Take the simple steps in our easy-to-follow tips—breathlessness, vague aches, exhaustion after the slightest exertion. Young children especially girls suffer, too.

If you're not getting enough oxygen, you are not receiving sufficient energy-giving oxygen which is dispensed by the blood throughout your body. Every second of the day and night, your nerves, organs and tissues are not properly nourished and you remain weary and drowsy. Get the GO which will give you the right amount of the famous Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for a few weeks. Dr. Williams' Pink Pills are specially compounded to help provide you with a permanent rich blood supply. Always at your chemist's store.

NEW LARGE FAMILY SIZE NOW AVAILABLE 6/6 A BOTTLE



TONGUE AND GHERKINS mixed with a jellied mayonnaise-type white sauce and set in a ring-tin make an ideal holiday luncheon dish. The ring is cut into wedges and served with crisp salad. See prize-winning recipe on this page.

Be gloriously blonde... win instant admiration

Let Napro Blonding Emulsion give you the glamorous blonde hair you've always envied. No other preparation is so pleasant and easy to use... leaves hair so naturally fair, soft and shining. Napro's gentle action cannot harm your hair— even protects its suppleness.

Lonely model, Shirley Beiger, uses and recommends Napro Blonding Emulsion.

NAPRO

BLONDING EMULSION

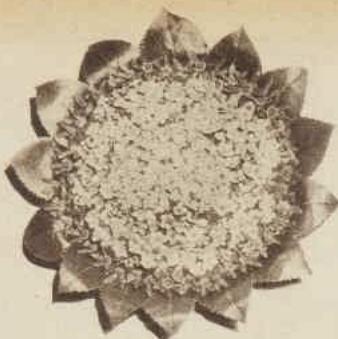
By the makers of Napro Hi-Lite, Hair Dye, Blonding Emulsion and other exclusive products



AT ALL STORES, CHEMISTS AND BEAUTY SALONS



FLORAL SAUCER design which won first prize at a recent horticultural show for 11-year-old Beryl Nankiville, of Summer Hill, N.S.W. Rose leaves outline the rings of daisies and larkspur, centred by a wild rose.



CHRISTMAS BUSH, forget-me-nots, and Japanese hydrangea in an outer circle of rose leaves form another floral saucer, which Mrs. J. B. Baker, of Five Dock, N.S.W., exhibited at the same show.

Lovely flower pieces are easily arranged

By EVE GYE

Floral experts often spend hours perfecting their arrangements of flowers, but the average housewife finds that her time is much more limited.

NEVERTHELESS, effective, attractive, and even dramatic flower pieces are within the scope of everyone.

Successful flower arrangement is a matter of interest, of observation, and of practice.

One of the fascinating little floral saucers featured at the top of this page was arranged by an 11-year-old girl. It won her first prize at a recent horticultural show in the Sydney Town Hall. Both this arrangement and the other one illustrated are simple, yet inspirational, and they are easy to copy.

The other arrangements, which can also be copied easily, show what can be done with mixed flowers, weeds, and gladioli.

One of the first essentials in flower arrangements is not to overcrowd and thus bruise the

blooms. Secondly, don't let the flowers face each other. They should look out so they can be seen.

Never use colors in equal amounts. For example, if you are arranging flowers of three colors, use much of one, a little of the second, and less of the third.

The container must be decorative and complementary to the flowers, but it must be secondary in importance to them.

Mixed designs

FOR mixed designs, combine round and spike flowers to make the most interesting arrangement. The spike flowers, such as gladioli, snapdragons, larkspur, and delphiniums, should be on the longest stems, and round ones, such as roses, chrysanthemums, geraniums, hydrangea, nasturtiums, carnations, dahlias, and daisies, on short stems.

Use the smaller, lighter-toned flowers for the outside of the design and the larger, round, darker flowers near the base and for the focal point.

Roses, carnations, snapdragons, and spring flowers remain fresh longer if placed in warm water at a temperature of 90 to 100 degrees.

Put these flowers deep in tepid water in a cool place for an hour or two before arranging them.

Woody-stemmed flowers, such as roses, chrysanthemums, hydrangea, and stocks, should be scraped from three to five inches up from the stem base so as to expose more cut surface for the intake of water.

The stems of these and other flowers, such as lilacs, should be crushed with a hammer or some other heavy object to expose the cells to water.

The stems of poinsettias, zinnias, poppies, and other similar flowers, which excrete a sticky substance, should be seared over a flame for five or six seconds.

Keep all flower arrangements away from draughts, and also remember that flowers do not like heat.

Many decorators use alum



in the water to make hydrangeas live longer; a pinch suffices. This alum treatment has also been used for roses.

Some cut flowers need more water than others, but a safe rule to follow is to keep one-third of the stem in water.

Always remove foliage below water level to prevent decay, which shortens the life of the flower arrangement.

A small teaspoonful of sugar mixed in the water in which marigolds and similar flowers are placed will keep any unpleasant odors away.

CHARMING WALL arrangement for hall or living-room. This mixed design by a Swedish homemaker includes a few white flowers to accent the blooms in lovely pastels and in the richer hues placed next to the base.



Three exhibits at a gladioli show



FRONTAL EFFECT design for hall or buffet table was a prize exhibit at recent gladioli exhibition in Sydney Town Hall.

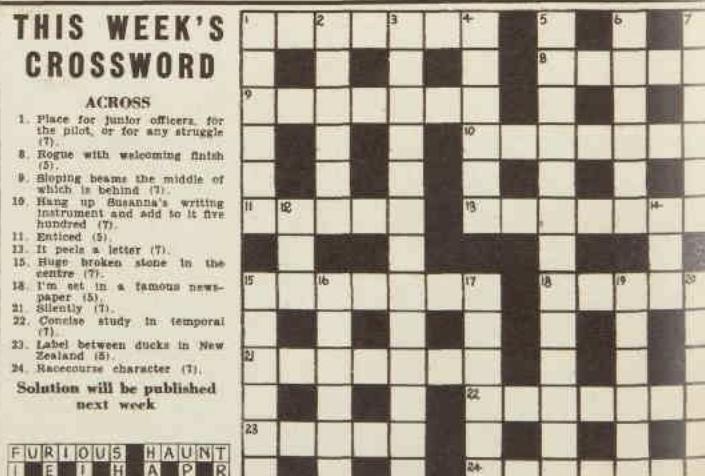
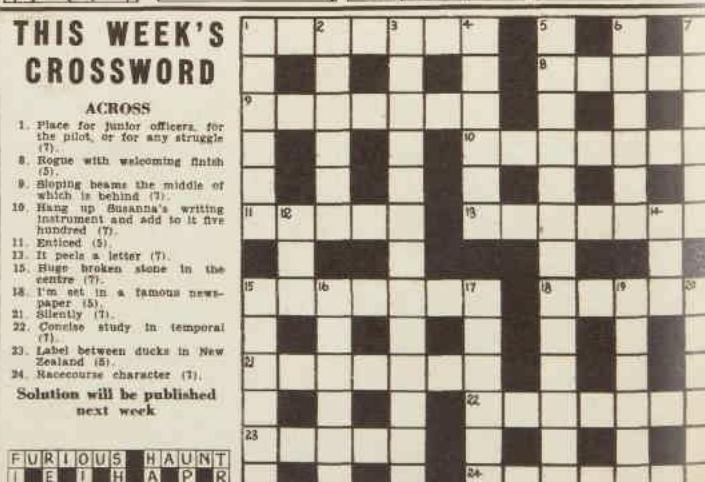


"LEANING TOWER" effect achieved by arranging spikes of richly-colored gladioli and leaves in a tall container.



MODERN informal arrangement of colorful gladioli allied with the picturesque Malacca palm for balance. This striking flower-piece was exhibited at the show by Mrs. A. Martin, of Oatley, N.S.W.

WEEDS, driftwood, and a tray. Dramatic effect captured by a Swedish artist in floral arrangement. This piece can be copied by substituting our own weeds and combining them with driftwood on a tray as shown.



CROSSWORD

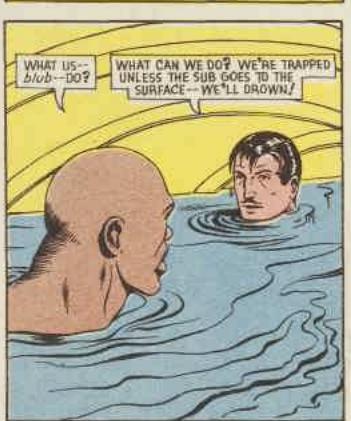
1. Place for junior officers, for the pilot, or for any struggle (10).
 2. Article with welcoming finish (5).
 3. Sloping beams the middle of which is behind (7).
 10. Hang up Susanna's writing instrument and add to it five hundred (7).
 11. Erratic (5).
 12. It poohs broken letter (7).
 15. Huge broken stone in the centre (7).
 18. I'm set in a famous newspaper (5).
 21. Silently (7).
 22. Concrete study in temporal (7).
 23. Label between ducks in New Zealand (5).
 24. Racecourse character (7).
 Solution will be published next week.

DOWN

1. This French genuine breakfast food (10).
 2. Chest for a person with a cold? (6).
 3. I nod at mere tip (anagr. 1, 4, 2, 3, 3).
 4. This fine-woven fabric is suet (16).
 5. According to Ben Jonson, you won't be a wine bibber if it is left by your lady friend (1, 4, 2, 3, 3).
 6. Opposite and looks like father's temporary shelter (16).
 7. Parish officer is bald with ease (6).
 12. Mouth of Lake Success (3).
 14. Shelter, famous American general (3).
 16. Transform to mere shooting star (6).
 17. Small beam of light when a bigger one is for rent (6).
 19. Get man for thing that attracts (16).
 20. Small vessel which lately is often seen flying (6).

Solutions to last week's crossword.

THE AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S WEEKLY - December 31, 1952



TO BE CONTINUED



Every day in
1953
you will enjoy
Arnott's *famous* Biscuits

1953	JANUARY	1953	1953	FEBRUARY	1953
Sun.	1	8	15	22	1
Mon.	2	9	16	23	2
Tues.	3	10	17	24	3
Wed.	4	11	18	25	4
Thurs.	5	12	19	26	5
Fri.	6	13	20	27	6
Sat.	7	14	21	28	7
1953	MARCH	1953	1953	APRIL	1953
Sun.	1	8	15	22	5
Mon.	2	9	16	23	12
Tues.	3	10	17	24	19
Wed.	4	11	18	25	26
Thurs.	5	12	19	26	23
Fri.	6	13	20	27	15
Sat.	7	14	21	28	18
1953	MAY	1953	1953	JUNE	1953
Sun.	31	3	10	17	7
Mon.	1	8	15	22	14
Tues.	2	9	16	23	21
Wed.	3	10	17	24	28
Thurs.	4	11	18	25	25
Fri.	5	12	19	26	12
Sat.	6	13	20	27	19
1953	JULY	1953	1953	AUGUST	1953
Sun.	1	8	15	22	2
Mon.	2	9	16	23	9
Tues.	3	10	17	24	16
Wed.	4	11	18	25	23
Thurs.	5	12	19	26	20
Fri.	6	13	20	27	27
Sat.	7	14	21	28	24
1953	SEPTEMBER	1953	1953	OCTOBER	1953
Sun.	1	8	15	22	3
Mon.	2	9	16	23	10
Tues.	3	10	17	24	17
Wed.	4	11	18	25	24
Thurs.	5	12	19	26	21
Fri.	6	13	20	27	28
Sat.	7	14	21	28	25
1953	NOVEMBER	1953	1953	DECEMBER	1953
Sun.	1	8	15	22	4
Mon.	2	9	16	23	11
Tues.	3	10	17	24	18
Wed.	4	11	18	25	25
Thurs.	5	12	19	26	22
Fri.	6	13	20	27	29
Sat.	7	14	21	28	26

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

New Year's Day	1st January	1st January	Foundation Day (W.A.)	1st June
Australia Day	26th January	26th January	Queen's Birthday (N.S.W. and Qld.)	2nd March
Labour Day (W.A.)	2nd March	2nd March	6-Hour Day (N.S.W.)	5th October
Good Friday	3rd April	3rd April	Queen's Birthday (W.A.), November (Date to be proclaimed)	31st December
Easter Saturday	4th April	4th April	Anzac Day	25th April
Easter Monday	6th April	6th April	Labour Day (Qld.)	4th May
Boxing Day	25th April	25th April	Christmas Day	25th December

There is no Substitute for Quality.